

PREACHING FOR DISCIPLESHIP: TRANSFORMATION AND  
TRANSITION FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS AND  
YOUNG ADULTS – 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY

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## **ABSTRACT**

# **PREACHING FOR DISCIPLESHIP: TRANSFORMATION AND TRANSITION FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS – 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY**

by

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United Theological Seminary, 2006

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The focus of this research was to determine whether preaching for discipleship was an effective tool for encouraging discipleship amongst the young adults at Bethel Baptist Institutional Church in Jacksonville, FL. The writer utilized the qualitative approach by disseminating questionnaires to ten members of the College and Young Adult's Ministry and mandating their attendance at an annual Revival of the entire congregation. The results of the study confirmed that transforming and transitioning young adults from membership to discipleship may be implemented by preaching in a revival type setting. Recommendations were made to implement this model on a quarterly basis.

## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this book to the following persons:

*The Trinity:* God, my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit,

*My Wife:* Veronica K. Brown,

*My Son:* Sean A. Brown

*My Grandmothers:* Annie Mae Williams and Irene Williams

*My Parents:* The late Henry L. Brown and Judy W. Brown

*My Sister:* Shantell M. O'Neal

*My Mentors:* Dr. Rudolph W. McKissick, Jr. and Dr. Harold Carter, Jr.

*My Pastors:* Dr. Rudolph W. McKissick, Sr. and Dr. Rudolph W. McKissick, Jr.

*My Context Associates,*

*My Consultants,*

*My Doctor of Ministry Peers,*

and

*My Church:* Bethel Baptist Institutional Church.

*Thank you for your Love and Support!*

## INTRODUCTION

The researcher, Rev. Corey L. Brown, was born in Jacksonville, FL and educated in the Duval public school system. As a graduate of Alabama A & M University with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting and the School of Theology at Virginia Union University with a Master of Divinity, he serves as the Pastor of College Students and Young Adults at Bethel Baptist Institutional Church in Jacksonville, FL. The researcher has served in this capacity for three years under the leadership of Dr. Rudolph W. McKissick, Sr. and Dr. Rudolph W. McKissick, Jr. and is married to the former Veronica Keene and has one child, Sean.

For the purpose of this project, the researcher decided to cover the topic *Preaching for Discipleship: Transformation and Transition for College Students and Young Adults in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. As the Pastor of College and Young Adults at Bethel, he believes preaching is necessary to encourage young adult groups to become who God has ordained them to be through Jesus Christ. The researcher's earnest desire is for college students and young adults to embrace God's will and his belief is that preaching will help them focus and participate in His plan for their lives. For those in this generation who lack spiritual direction, the researcher feels the proclamation of the Word is an effective tool. Therefore, the researcher expounded on why preaching is necessary for transformation and transition as it pertains to discipleship for college students and young adults.

For the most part, learning within the researcher's ministry occurred primarily through teaching. In an effort to encourage discipleship, the researcher decided to implement the tool of preaching. He employed the model of a Revival for this purpose. A Revival is a worship experience that seeks to promote spiritual awakening and restoration. Unlike normal revivals, which are held for the general congregation, the researcher implemented a Revival specifically for college students and young adults. In addition to young adults within the church, students from various colleges in Jacksonville were invited to attend the service. As a result, he discovered that preaching is an effective tool for promoting discipleship among college students and young adults. The proclamation of the Gospel generated excitement, increased membership and encouraged members within the ministry to do God's will through Jesus Christ. Thus, the researcher recognized the positive impact that preaching can have on the church and its community. Preaching was also implemented during an annual Discipleship Conference. The gospel was proclaimed on the opening night of the conference and workshops were offered the next day. The researcher was able to recognize the influence that preaching had upon the college students and young adults in attendance.

In Chapter One, the researcher discusses his ministry focus, *Preaching for Discipleship: Transformation and Transition for College Students and Young Adults in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* and defines the model of Revival. He also informs readers of the special insights in this area of ministry that the model addresses.

In Chapter Two, the researcher provides readers with a synopsis of the literature related to this ministry model.



In Chapter Three, the researcher establishes the theoretical foundation for the preaching model related to the transformation and transition for young adults in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. He goes on to dissect the model into three areas: theological, biblical and historical foundations.

In Chapter Four, the researcher discusses the methodology and the design of the preaching model and discusses the paradigm he used in the field experience.

In Chapter Five, the researcher provides readers with an overview of the implementation of the model and analyzes the data collected during the field work.

Finally, in Chapter Six, the researcher summarizes his project based on the results of the field experience. He also provides readers with suggestions on what should be done differently in the future implementation of this project and provides recommendations for future research. The researcher also provides his theological reflection as a result of the completion of this project.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **MINISTRY FOCUS**

#### **The Spiritual Journey**

In Chapter One, the researcher's goal is to elaborate on his spiritual journey and ministry focus. First, the researcher informs readers of experiences as a child. Next, he will talk about his walk as a youth. In addition, the researcher discusses his journey as a young adult. Each of these stages comprises significant experiences that have been instrumental in shaping his spirituality and the development of this project. Finally, the researcher will expound on his ministry context.

To begin, as a child, the researcher caught the school bus from his grandmother's house to attend Bethel Baptist Institutional Church in Jacksonville, FL. His mother would drop him and his sister off on Sunday morning so they could attend Sunday School with cousins. Often times, the researcher's maternal grandmother would serve breakfast before the bus arrived because she claimed it was the most important meal of the day. For the most part, the researcher attended church each Sunday because its significance was highly emphasized in his family. As a child, the researcher did not have a choice because his mother felt that it was necessary for his growth. After Sunday School, he attended worship service to hear the Word of God and the ministry of music. Although Sunday School was fine, worship service was a challenge because it was traditional and

lengthy. As a result, the researcher would sometimes ask his father to pick him up after Sunday School so he could play basketball at a local park in Norwood. Although he received a mean stare from his mother he didn't mind because he enjoyed playing basketball more than sitting in church. Nevertheless, he was intrigued with the proclamation of the gospel.

Sometimes when the researcher returned to his grandmother's house he would imitate his pastor, Dr. Rudolph W. McKissick, Sr. With his cousin serving as a musician and his sister serving as the laity he would preach the gospel in his grandmother's living room. This experience led his grandmother to prophetically declare that he was destined to be a preacher. As he moved throughout life her declaration stayed with him.

One of the most significant moments in the researcher's life happened when he was in the tenth grade at Jean Ribault Senior High School where he was the quarterback for the junior varsity football team. His team was undefeated when they played Ed White High School on a cool fall night. The researcher remembers getting roughed up by their defense for most of the game. Things got so bad that he ended up taking himself out the game. He was dizzy and frustrated so he left the field in the second half.

After a couple of weeks the researcher experienced a major life threatening incident that would have a major impact on his life. The researcher was in the process of taking a test when his head started hurting. Initially, his teacher refused to excuse him. However, she changed her mind when she saw that it was serious. The researcher proceeded to the dean's office to call his father. After the phone call, the researcher could hardly remember anything because he was having seizures. The only thing he recalls is his father arriving at the Boys and Girls Club office at Tenth and Liberty to ask

for assistance. Upon receiving medical advice, the researcher ended up at Memorial Hospital where Dr. Alphonso Bremer performed surgery to remove a blood clot from his head. After surgery, he was hospitalized for a month and was also tutored at home for another month. Whenever the researcher reflects on that experience he praises God because he recognized that things could have been worse. If he wouldn't have taken himself out the game the next hit may have ended his life. In addition, he was also fortunate that he didn't suffer a blow to the head when he returned to practice. The researcher remembers stumbling when going down steps and falling down at the end of a run.

As you can imagine, this event moved him and his father closer to God. Prior to this incident his father didn't attend church, but afterwards he made his presence known. When the researcher returned to church he accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. Naturally, his father did the same. Both of them attended new members' orientation together seeking God's purpose for their lives.

There were two additional moments that were very monumental in the researcher's life. Each incident occurred shortly after high school and involved friends that he played basketball with while at Jean Ribault Senior High School. Shortly after getting situated at Alabama A&M University in Huntsville, AL, the researcher received word that his ex-teammate David Young had been shot to death. David and the researcher played basketball together at Northwestern Junior High School and they helped Jean Ribault Senior High School win its first state championship. The news of David's death drew the researcher even closer to God. He began to read his bible more and spent a lot of time in prayer with God.

The next summer the researcher received yet another phone call that informed him that Maurice Trotter, his best friend, had also been murdered. This was too much for the researcher. This was his “boy” from childhood. He grew up with the researcher at Kooker Park Boys and Girls Club where the researcher’s father served as Director and Coach. The researcher and his father were both hurt because Maurice had been very close to their family. The passing of David and Maurice were two incidents that caused the researcher to take life more seriously. He couldn’t wait to return to school because he needed something to take his mind off these matters.

While in college the researcher didn’t attend church every Sunday, primarily due to a lack of transportation. He didn’t obtain a car until his senior year and his classmates with transportation weren’t too interested in taking him to worship and praising the Lord. Although some churches provided transportation to their worship service, their style of worship and proclamation wasn’t appealing to the researcher.

Due to an injured left ankle, the researcher concentrated more on his academics during his junior year. He stopped playing basketball due to his injury and gave himself completely to his studies. Upon finishing school, the researcher was determined to obtain a great job. He was fortunate to receive an internship with KPMG Peat Marwick, an accounting firm, at the end of his junior year. He gained valuable experience interning during the summer and winter months while working with the audit and tax department. He interned with KPMG for two years before God blessed him with an opportunity to work in the field of sports, where his original passion began.

After interning with KPMG Peat Marwick, the researcher received a blessing one Sunday morning. The Vice President of Football Operations for the Jacksonville Jaguars

visited his church and the researcher introduced himself to him. He invited the researcher to meet with him the next morning to discuss an opportunity within the organization. Upon meeting with him, he offered the researcher a position as an intern in Football Operations with the possibility of obtaining full-time employment. As a former athlete, he was excited because this was a unique opportunity. Although the researcher had a job offer from a bank, he turned it down for a chance to secure full-time employment with the Jacksonville Jaguars. Eventually, he received an offer to work full-time for the organization as the Coordinator of Football Operations. Despite long hours, the researcher allotted time to attend bible study on Wednesdays at noon. Things were going very well on the job until his second year. He received a promotion after the first year to become the Manager of Football Operations. However, his boss decided to move in another direction midway through the following year. Essentially, the researcher was encouraged by his boss to find another job. As a result of this encounter, the researcher decided to become a sports agent in an effort to represent players entering the National Football League.

The researcher moved to Atlanta, Georgia to work with ProFiles Sports Management, Inc. The sports agency firm was owned by Pat Dye, Jr. He was the agent for a couple of players on the Jacksonville Jaguars team and he primarily recruited in the southeast. The researcher was hired as the Director of Client Development and one of his main responsibilities consisted of recruiting college players that had the potential of being drafted in the NFL draft. He traveled throughout the southeast every week to watch college games and spent time with players and their families. Near the end of the season the monotony affected the researcher because he became tired of traveling every

weekend. In addition, he felt his efforts were in vain when the players he recruited would often sign with another firm.

After assessing his situation, the researcher prayed to find out if it was God's will for him to preach the Gospel. Prior to moving to Atlanta, he had considered what his grandmother declared about him becoming a preacher, but he decided to pursue his professional agenda before he proceeded in that direction. One afternoon, while at work, he asked God to confirm if *He* wanted him to preach His Word. That evening he attended bible study at New Birth Missionary Baptist Church and received confirmation. Bishop Eddie Long taught from a very familiar text in the Gospel of Matthew involving Peter.<sup>1</sup> Peter asked Jesus to bid him to walk on the water.<sup>2</sup> When the researcher heard the preacher reading the scripture he recalled being amazed and overjoyed at the same time especially when he noticed where Jesus told Peter to "come." It was incredible for the researcher to hear a passage that was similar to his experience. That, alone, was sufficient for him. Additionally, it was ironic that the church was ordaining ministers that very same evening.

Subsequently, the researcher called his pastors in Jacksonville to inform them of the revelation and they encouraged him to pray and ask God for additional confirmation. Upon receiving confirmation, the researcher expressed to them his intentions to move back to Jacksonville. Since there were a great number of ministers at New Birth the researcher didn't believe he would have an opportunity to utilize his gifts. Therefore, he thought it would be best for him to return home. Once the researcher returned he

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 14:22-29

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

received an opportunity to preach his initial sermon. This served as further confirmation that he was called to preach. Upon preaching, his pastors encouraged him to attend seminary in order to enhance his gifts. The researcher took heed of their advice because he was extremely interested in doing what God called him to do.

Prior to attending seminary, the researcher taught a Sunday School class for children and acted as a facilitator to Bethel's youth. Eventually, he was approached in regard to implementing a new Sunday School class that would minister to young adults. Although the class was successful, the researcher matriculated to the School of Theology at Virginia Union University to equip himself for ministry.

The researcher's time at Virginia Union was a challenge. Academically, it was difficult because he had been out of school for a while. Thus, he had to adjust to doing course work again. Financially, it was a challenge because he went from making a moderate salary to hardly making anything. Due to his circumstances, the researcher learned some things about God that he didn't know before. He had concerns about finishing his course work while providing ministry at the church, but God provided what he needed to address his situation. Although he preached on a consistent basis the researcher was able to handle his responsibilities.

While in seminary, the researcher interned at First African Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia where Rev. Dennis E. Thomas served as Pastor. The church reminded the researcher of his home church during his childhood and teenage years because it was very traditional. As a minister, he taught a Sunday School class for young adults and worked closely with the youth. He was given the opportunity to preside over worship services and blessed with the chance to serve communion. This happened as a



result of the researcher being ordained by his pastors in Jacksonville. One summer, the pastor at First African Baptist Church encouraged the researcher to ask his pastors about getting ordained because he wanted to use him in a greater capacity. The researcher had already received his license to preach so the next step comprised of ordination. Upon ordination, he was asked to serve as the Minister of Christian Education at First African Baptist Church. He was responsible for working with others to establish various curriculums for ministries within the church. He also implemented a Bible study class on Friday nights for parents and guardians that brought their children to choir rehearsal.

During the summer of 2001, God opened up a door for the researcher to work in Portsmouth, Virginia at Third Baptist Church where Rev. Joe B. Fleming served as Pastor. He served as the Co-Director of the church's Summer Enrichment Program where he was responsible for planning daily activities for children and youth. Also, he was given the opportunity to utilize his accounting skills by creating an inventory listing for the church. In addition, he preached on several occasions. These experiences lead to other preaching engagements within the area.

The researcher's seminary experience was very rewarding. He received guidance from some of the most prominent preachers and professors in the nation and also gained valuable ministry experience. Upon obtaining his Master of Divinity, the researcher returned to Jacksonville to work as the Pastor of College and Young Adults at Bethel Baptist Institutional Church.

For the most part, the researcher returned to assist one of his Pastors, Dr. Rudolph W. McKissick, Jr. Whenever he was scheduled to preach outside of Jacksonville the researcher had the responsibility of preaching in his place. The researcher also counseled

members when his pastor's schedule wouldn't allow him and occasionally he visited sick members that were hospitalized. Sometimes the researcher had the responsibility of presiding over and eulogizing the deceased. He was also accountable for providing guidance to Bethel's ministers in regard to preaching. Besides assisting his Pastors, the researcher equipped college students and young adults for discipleship and evangelism. He sought to accomplish this by offering various opportunities within his ministry. One such opportunity was Tuesday Night Transformation ("TNT"). The ministry gathered once a month for praise, worship and bible study to discuss relevant topics that pertained to the group. The DRUM-line (Divas Reaching for Unlimited Miracles) was another opportunity for women within the ministry who desired to become the women that God has ordained them to be. In this ministry setting, the researcher utilized extraordinary women in the Bible to assist women in realizing God's vision for their lives. The ministry also consisted of SWAT (Spiritual Warriors Anointed to Takeover). This opportunity sought to provide men vision and purpose so they can possess what God has for their life. Similar to the women, the researcher used extraordinary men within the Bible to gain insight on what men should do to receive God's promises. In addition, the researcher teaches a Sunday school class and sends out a weekly devotional. Furthermore, he plans his ministry's annual conference that has grown tremendously over the years. He also implemented a forum at Bethel in which he invited pastors from the area to dialogue about issues that impact the community and nation.

After returning to Bethel, the researcher had to deal with the monumental loss of the passing of his father. Prior to seminary, the researcher's father was hospitalized and one of his doctors informed the researcher that his heart would only hold up for about

three years. In addition to dealing with school related matters, the researcher was also burdened with this news. When the researcher graduated he was thankful that his father was in attendance. However, he noticed that his father was getting weaker. Although the doctor informed the researcher about his father's condition, he was hurt and frustrated when he passed. It was nobody but God that enabled the researcher to continue in ministry because it was very difficult for him to stay focused during this time. He recalls struggling while preparing sermons because he didn't receive the answer he wanted, but he heard God telling him through his father "Stay faithful to the call."

As the researcher meditated on his journey he realized how God has worked everything together for his good. He recognized how his experiences prepared him for his present ministry. The researcher believes his gifts of leadership, preaching, teaching and administration have been enhanced due to his experiences. Therefore, in the next section, he will inform readers how his spiritual journey complemented his context of ministry.

### **The Context of the Ministry**

In July 1838, Bethel Baptist Institutional Church was organized under the title of Bethel Baptist Church.<sup>3</sup> It was the first organized Baptist church in Jacksonville. The congregation consisted of six charter members: Rev. James McDonald and his wife, Mr. & Mrs. Elias Jaudan and Peggy and Bacchus, who were enslaved Africans. The first

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<sup>3</sup>For further information about the context see "Bethel Baptist Institutional Church," (Jacksonville, FL: 2004); available from <http://www.bethelite.org/about.html>; internet; accessed on October 10, 2006.

meeting place was a Government Block House, which stood near the County Courthouse. In 1840, the church bought a lot on the northeast corner of Duval and Newnan streets and built their first house of worship. The Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida incorporated Bethel Church on February 10, 1841. The first trustees were a part of the incorporation.

At the end of the Civil War, the white members of the church went into court and sought to dispossess the brothers and sisters of the church property and name. However, since the colored members represented the majority, the court decided that they were the “Bethel Baptist Church” and the rightful owners of the church property. As a result of this separation, the white members established Tabernacle Baptist Church, which later was named First Baptist Church.

Upon separation, colored members built the first Bethel Baptist church in 1868. The congregation worshiped in this building for twenty-seven years and grew from a few souls to several hundred. The building was torn down in 1895. Rev. Cataline Simmons served as the first pastor and he organized the first Deacon Board and Trustee Board in the separated church. The worship services were held in a one-room frame building located on the northwest corner of Main and Union Streets. Rev. Simmons was one of the first African-Americans to be elected to the Jacksonville Board of Alderman (now the City Council). He was also elected to serve on the Duval County School Board in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. He served as Pastor from 1868 to 1880.

Rev. Rodger D. Dunbar was called as the second pastor of the church and he served from 1880 until 1885. During his tenure, the Sunday school was established. After leaving Bethel, he organized the Harmony Baptist Church.

The third pastor, Rev. J. Gardner Ross, served from 1885 until 1890. He received his early training in Boston at the Newton Theological Institute. Under his leadership, the first parsonage for Bethel was built. It was considered the first parsonage for a Baptist church in the state of Florida. Rev. Gardner provided dynamic leadership in the areas of Christian Education and Outreach. The Trinity Baptist Church, now known as Central Baptist Church, was founded during his pastorate.

Rev. Matthew W. Gilbert was called as the fourth pastor and served faithfully for two years. He earned his Bachelor of Divinity Degree from Colgate College and Doctor of Divinity Degree from Guadalupe College. During his pastorate, several ministries were implemented. The Home and Foreign Missionary Society was organized in October 1891 to serve the Mission at Sweetwater and a Deaconess Board was organized. In addition, the first choir director and organist were appointed and the first choir was organized. Also, during Rev. Gilbert's tenure, the Florida Baptist Academy was founded in 1882 at Bethel and he served as its first president. Eventually, the name of the school became Florida Normal and Industrial Institute and was moved to St. Augustine, Florida. The institution is now known as Florida Memorial College and is located in Miami, FL. In 1950, Matthew Gilbert School was named in his honor by the Duval County public school system.

The fifth pastor of Bethel, Rev. J. Milton Waldron, served from 1892 to 1907. He graduated from Lincoln University and Newton Theological Institute. During his pastorate, Bethel was incorporated as Bethel Baptist Institutional Church. In addition, the Usher Board and the BYPU were organized. In 1895, a black congregation erected the first Institutional Church building. Bethel Baptist Institutional Church was located at

Union and Pine (Main) streets. It was built of red pressed brick, trimmed with Georgia marble. The building comprised of a main auditorium with a seating capacity of 1150 and nine classrooms at a cost of \$26,000. It was erected by black mechanics under the direction of black contractors. At the time of erection, it was the most convenient and attractive church building in Jacksonville, FL. This beautiful edifice was in use for a short time due to it being destroyed by the great fire that devastated the city on May 31, 1901. After the fire the membership purchased the River Square bound by Hogan, Eagle (now First Street), Julia, and Caroline (now Bethel Baptist Street) and began rebuilding. Also, in 1901, the Afro-American Life Insurance Company was founded under Rev. Waldron's leadership.

A new church building was erected in 1904 under the leadership of Bethel's sixth pastor, Rev. John E. Ford. Rev. Ford served as pastor from 1907 to 1943. He attended Fisk University, Blount College and Morgan Park Theological Seminary. He was the first African American to graduate from the University of Chicago where he earned A.B., B.D. and M.A. degrees. During his tenure, Bethel became a standard institutional church with seven departments in a graded Sunday school along with becoming a business and vocational school. Bethel Business College graduated its first class in 1907. From 1908 through the late 1920's, the Bethel Baptist Institutional Day School educated elementary students. During the 1930's, Rev. Ford organized Boy and Girl Scout troops at Bethel. John E. Ford elementary school was named in honor of him in 1954.

Reverend A. Charles Robinson joined Bethel in 1896. In 1906, he was appointed assistant deacon then ordained deacon until he accepted his call to the ministry and license in 1934. He was ordained and elected Assistant Pastor to Rev. Ford in 1937.

Rev. Robinson served as interim pastor from August 1943 to June 1944 after the death of Rev. Ford. He also served as interim pastor from 1945 to 1946 and from 1952 to 1953.

Rev. Charles Satchel Morris II served as Pastor of Bethel from 1944 to 1945.

Under his leadership, he was noted for conducting a twelve series revival and organizing a seventy-five voice gospel choir. He organized one of the most successful and largest revivals in Bethel's history. A special revival choir was organized and provided music for each service.

The next Pastor of Bethel was Rev. Leonard E. Terrell. He served as Pastor from 1946 to 1952. He made extraordinary contributions to the youth of Bethel. He placed special emphasis on scouting and served as chairman of the Finance Committee, which raised funds to build a camp for African American Girl Scouts. Also, during his tenure, he increased emphasis on Bible drill in the BYPU department.

Rev. Robert H. Wilson served as Pastor at Bethel from 1953 to 1966. He received the A.B. and B.D. degrees from Benedict College. During his tenure, the Senior and Junior Women's Missionary Societies were reactivated to assist the sick and shut-in members as well as meeting the needs of individuals through Bethel's Clothes Bank. His vision produced several choirs, a radio broadcast and telephone prayer line and a weekly newsletter. Rev. Wilson participated in Civil Rights marches and restaurant sit-ins. He was a sought after revival minister throughout the nation.

Rev. Rudolph W. McKissick, Sr. was installed as pastor in March 1967 upon serving as interim pastor in 1966. He is the longest serving pastor in Bethel's renowned history. Rev. McKissick, Sr. was the first pastor called from the congregation. Under his leadership, the church purchased additional property. Almost two decades later, on

January 31, 1988, an adjacent Education and Administration building was constructed. The building, which complements the church edifice in both architecture and height, provides a modern expanded nursery, kindergarten facilities, kitchen and dining facilities on the first floor. In addition, an administrative and general office, large and small conference rooms, robing rooms, library and music suite are located on the second floor. A large assembly room, twenty-seven church school classrooms and a church school office are located on the third floor. An elevator provides service between the three floors of this facility. In addition, the church implemented the Living Bequest program, the Capital Stewardship Campaign and the Bethel Baptist Institutional Federal Credit Union. Also, the church sponsored the tape ministry program, replaced the 1905 pipe organ and revived the telephone prayer line. Furthermore, a Children's Church and new ministries: the Birthday Ministry, Summer Enrichment Ministries and the Music Ministry were added to serve the congregation. Under his leadership more than 45 "Sons and Daughters in the ministry" have evolved and members are given an opportunity for discipleship in more than forty ministries.

On January 1, 1996, Dr. Rudolph W. McKissick, Jr., the pastor's son was called by Bethel Baptist Institutional Church as Assistant Pastor. Rev. McKissick, Jr. was installed as pastor in partnership with Rev. McKissick, Sr. in January 1999. During this partnership, various ministries have been added including Joshua's Generation, karate for youth, and the praise singers, praise dancers and step team. Pastor McKissick Jr.'s vision was the foundation for the weekly Sunday morning television ministry. His gift of music and singing has resulted in the production of a CD that has received local and national



acclaim.<sup>4</sup> In addition to his musical gifts, Pastor McKissick, Jr. is an anointed messenger of God who is nationally known as an outstanding evangelical speaker.

In 2002, Bethel moved into its new sanctuary. This new \$7.5 million structure has a seating capacity of 3,500 persons and includes the Bethel Family Life Center. Since the union of this father-son team, more than 1,000 souls have been added to the Body of Christ and thousands more to the membership of Bethel. In addition, in September 2003, Bethel purchased property in the Arlington community that is comprised of 17 acres, 277 rooms and over 21,000 square feet of meeting/banquet space. In the next section, the researcher will elaborate on the development and growth of his ministry at Bethel Baptist that led to the initiation of this ministry model.

### **The Basis for the Ministry Model**

Upon obtaining his Master of Divinity, the researcher returned to Jacksonville to work as the Pastor of College and Young Adults at Bethel Baptist Institutional Church. Essentially, he returned to assist Pastor, Dr. Rudolph W. McKissick, Jr. Whenever he was scheduled to preach outside of Jacksonville the researcher had the responsibility of preaching on Wednesday at noon for the mid-week worship service. He counseled members when the pastor's schedule didn't permit him and he also visited the sick and shut-in members. Sometimes the researcher had the responsibility of presiding and

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<sup>4</sup> Pastor Rudolph W. McKissick, Jr. and The Word and Worship Mass Choir, "Because You Are Worthy," *Because You Are Worthy*, Sound Recording. Jacksonville, FL: Troy Sneed, 2002.

eulogizing at funerals. In addition, he also provided preaching instruction to Bethel's associate ministers.

Besides assisting both pastors, the researcher sought to equip college students and young adults between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-five for discipleship and evangelism. He accomplished this by creating various opportunities within his ministry.

At Bethel, young adults have the opportunity to join various ministries including:

- TNT (Tuesday Night Transformation). The TNT ministry gathers once a month for praise and worship and Bible study to discuss relevant topics that pertain to the group. The group is comprised of college students and young adults within Bethel.

- The DRUM-line (Divas Reaching for Unlimited Miracles) is an opportunity for women within the ministry who desire to become the women God has created them to be. In this ministry setting the researcher considers extraordinary women in the Bible to assist women in bringing God's vision for their lives to pass.

- SWAT (Spiritual Warriors Anointed to Takeover) is another opportunity within the College and Young Adult Ministry. Its mission is to bless men with vision and purpose so they can possess what God has for their life. Similar to *the sisters*, the researcher focuses on extraordinary men within the Bible to help men realize God's promises.

In addition to TNT, the DRUM-Line and SWAT, the researcher teaches Sunday school and sends out weekly devotionals to individuals within and outside his ministry. Furthermore, he is responsible for planning his ministry's annual conference that has grown tremendously during his tenure. He has also implemented a forum in which he has invited pastors from the area to dialogue about issues that impact the community and

nation. Moreover, the researcher also has the responsibility of providing leadership to the Scholarship Committee, which seeks to provide financial support to encourage high school students to attend college and to support college students within the congregation.

The researcher decided to pursue this project since he is responsible for the spiritual growth and development of college students and young adults within his ministry context. In addition, he believes his seminary and ministry experience equipped him to further provide ministry that would transition and transform young adult members, in particular, within his ministry from membership to discipleship. The researcher recognized the positive impact that preaching had upon the congregation so he utilized this tool to encourage the young adult members to also pursue their calling through Jesus Christ.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY PROJECT

The objective of this section is to demonstrate the writer's familiarity with the literature related to his project. Therefore, the various concepts and paradigms of ministry that were examined pertaining to preaching for discipleship and ministry for college students and young adults will be reviewed.

One of the primary responsibilities of a pastor is to equip believers for Kingdom ministry. The pastor has the task of making disciples within the body of Christ. Although various methods can be utilized to equip believers, preaching can be used to encourage discipleship. In addition to introducing persons to Jesus Christ, the preacher should proclaim Him as Lord and Savior. "Authentic gospel preaching always keeps the demands of Christian discipleship before people. Cheap sensational stunts and shallow but entertaining sermons may attract crowds, but so does a carnival. But these do not bring individuals to genuine commitment to the person of Jesus Christ or to a life of growth and ministry in his name."<sup>1</sup> Jesus encouraged individuals to become disciples and the researcher believes effective preaching can inspire them to fulfill this purpose.

In the book *Growing Disciples Through Preaching*, the authors sought to encourage discipleship within their congregation by proclaiming the gospel. Their approach was three-fold. First, they set out to explore or define discipleship for their

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<sup>1</sup> Nolin P. Howington, Alton H. McEachern and William M. Pinson, Jr., *Growing Disciples Through Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1976), Intro.

congregation. Second, they sought to motivate persons to experience discipleship. Lastly, it was their desire to encourage their laity to express discipleship.

In relation to exploring discipleship, messages were preached to provide a clear understanding of the meaning of discipleship. Sermons such as *Life Under the Cross*; *Discipleship: Impulsive or Reflective*; *The Disciple's Witness* and *Disciples in the Making* were preached to the congregation. In the sermon *Life Under the Cross*, the author provides several meanings of discipleship as depicted by the cross. Pertaining to Jesus he stated the cross is “an unqualified surrender of his whole being to the will of God.”<sup>2</sup> He further declared, “It is the epitome of a life bent on carrying out a divine mission.”<sup>3</sup> He also stated that discipleship is “obedience to God’s will regardless of the cost to ourselves.”<sup>4</sup>

In regard to experiencing discipleship, sermons such as *Discipleship as Commitment*; *Discipleship as Discipline*; *Discipleship and the Devotional Life* and *Discipleship as Ministry* were proclaimed to the laity. In the sermon *Discipleship as Ministry*, the author talked about an individual’s ministry through the church, their ministry within and their ministry without. In respect to one’s ministry within the church he says, “Many of us find our ministry given expression through the church. We cherish its worship and are nourished by its teaching of the Scriptures. However, the test of faith is not simply what happens while we are at church – caught up in its worship and praise, sharing, and fellowship. The real test is what happens after we leave the church -- at

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 14.

home and school, at work, and at the club.”<sup>5</sup> In relation to ministry within, the author suggests that withdrawal for worship is essential for a disciple. “Jesus is our example in withdrawal. He was present in public worship services, and he often left clamoring human need to spend time quietly with his disciples or alone with his heavenly Father.”<sup>6</sup> Pertaining to our ministry without, we are admonished to explore opportunities for personal ministry. The authors state, “If Christ’s disciple is sensitive to the Spirit’s leading, he can find a point of contact with unsaved persons, and share his faith. All of us know persons who need the Lord. We can win their confidence and tell them what Christ means in our experience. When the opportunity comes, we can share the way of salvation.”<sup>7</sup>

In respect to expressing discipleship, messages such as *Expressing Discipleship Through Church Life*, *Expressing Discipleship Through Witness*, *Expressing Discipleship Through Family Life* and *Expressing Discipleship in the World* were proclaimed to the faith community. In the sermon *Expressing Discipleship Through Family Life*, the authors shared several ways in which discipleship can be expressed in relation to family. They stated, “Discipleship is to be expressed by the way we help one another within families to grow spiritually, to learn about God’s Word and about his ways.”<sup>8</sup> They also mentioned that the Bible encourages us to “express discipleship through family by evangelism.”<sup>9</sup> Finally, they declared, “discipleship is expressed in

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 117.

family life through ministry and service.”<sup>10</sup> Indeed, the biblical texts utilized and the sermons shared in *Growing Disciples Through Preaching* were instrumental in helping me to implement preaching within my ministry.

In *The Campus Ministry*, George L. Earnshaw provides several insights on how to minister to the college student.<sup>11</sup> He suggested that preaching is the best linkage for the preacher and student. He also mentioned four principles that a preacher should adhere to in order make an impact upon the academic community. First, the author expressed that the preacher should acknowledge that his or her call is to preach and not to lecture. Second, he stated that preaching consists of proclaiming the gospel. Here, he talked about the growth of biblical illiteracy among college students and the significance of the preacher to provide sound doctrine. Third, he noted that it's imperative for the preacher to recognize that he or she preaches to a particular congregation. In order to be relevant, the preacher must be familiar with his or her audience. “The minister preaches to a specific congregation. His words are not addressed to people in general nor do they fall in a vacuum. There before him sits a peculiar people, the congregation to which God has mysteriously related him. Even beyond peculiarity, this people is unique. What he does say must be addressed to the sheep of his own field, not to those over the fence or over the mountain or over the sea. These who sit before him, it is their sins which must be exposed, their heartbreaks assuaged, their flagging hopes revived, their crusted eyes opened, their anxieties probed and made bearable, their lives made new through God's

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>11</sup> George L. Earnshaw, *The Campus Ministry* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1964).

powerful Son and Spirit. To address himself to matters which do not touch this congregation is, for the preacher, an act of irresponsibility.”<sup>12</sup> Finally, the author mentioned that the preacher is responsible for preaching to the entire congregation. Thus, the preacher must understand the diversity of his or her audience and construct a sermon that addresses everyone in attendance.

In addition, Earnshaw pointed out six guidelines that would help preachers minister to college students. To begin, he expressed that a preacher should understand and be aware of the thought patterns of his or her audience. Next, he stated the importance for the preacher to be accurate in his proclamation since his or her audience may be knowledgeable about a certain area that is addressed in the sermon. The author also mentioned that a sermon has to be relevant. It has to deal with the real issues of the congregation for it to be embraced. Furthermore, the preacher must have regard for the truth when preaching to college students. If he or she is uncertain about a matter they should avoid dealing with it until they receive clarity. Moreover, the preacher is admonished to have a seeking attitude. He or she should display a sense of humility by showing their interest in growing and developing as a preacher. To conclude, a preacher must proclaim the Word with boldness and authority to his or her congregation. One must preach with clarity and conviction to be effective within the academic community.

Author Rolf A. Syrdal in *Go Make Disciples*, states that preaching is supposed to extend beyond the purpose of bringing salvation to an unbeliever. The mission of the church, as commanded by Jesus, is to make disciples of all nations. The author stated, “Those who enter the kingdom of God repent of their old ways, receive a new heart and

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<sup>12</sup>Howington, McEachern and Pinson, Jr., *Growing Disciples Through Preaching*, 160.



live a completely new life.”<sup>13</sup> Thus, a person is admonished to fulfill the purpose God has ordained for them through Jesus Christ.

In relation to evangelism, the author mentioned that it “deals with the individual on a very personal basis to present Christ as Savior, but it is more than that. It is more than momentary confrontation, sometimes called revivalism. It deals with spiritual life from its beginning to full growth – from the time of baptism to death – from the Word that awakens and saves through growth in the Spirit till a person is “thoroughly equipped for every good work.”<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, it was stated “evangelism does not aim only at a single experience of salvation. It must nurture the new life and lead it to a living concern for the building of the kingdom, in full fellowship within the church.”<sup>15</sup> Essentially, the church isn’t merely called to offer salvation to the unsaved, but it’s directed to produce disciples for the Kingdom of God. “Evangelism is the key to increased service in the church today because its one emphasis is to lead people into a living relationship with Christ. It is not a tool or another gimmick or grand master plan for raising money. It brings a person into a living relationship of faith in Christ which results in a driving impulse to give and be given.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Rolf A. Syral, *Go Make Disciples* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1977), 76.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

In this section, the researcher seeks to express the theological, biblical and historical foundations for his ministry focus. He will expound on his theology of preaching, discipleship, transition and transformation and the hip-hop generation. He will also elaborate on the views of Paul Tillich, Letty Russell and James Cone. Moreover, he will consider doctrines within womanist theology, neo-orthodox theology, existential theology and narrative theology. In addition, the researcher will expound on liberation theology, Afrocentricity, process theology and evangelical theology. Furthermore, he will expand on anthropology, Christology, soteriology, pneumatology and ecclesiology. The researcher will also elaborate on instances within the Bible that relate to his project.

Initially, the researcher will define preaching and discuss its various components. Preaching, according to John A. Broadus, consists of “the proclamation of glad tidings.”<sup>1</sup> Essentially, it is the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ. It involves a person sharing a revelatory message from God with other people. Christian preaching seeks to save souls for Jesus Christ and it encourages a behavioral change from its listeners. Preaching has a central place within the Christian community. It was vital in the ministry of Jesus Christ. While in the synagogue Jesus stated, “The Spirit of the Lord is on me,

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<sup>1</sup> John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1979), 2.

because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."<sup>2</sup> Prior to his ascension, he passed down the strategy of preaching to his disciples. In the Great Commission he commanded them to preach the gospel everywhere for the purpose of making disciples, baptism and providing instruction for Christian living. Thus, the method of preaching has been very instrumental in the advancement of the Kingdom.

The proclamation of the gospel brought the church into existence and the same method of communication will sustain it. "The record of Christian history has been that the strength of the church is directly related to the strength of the pulpit."<sup>3</sup> When preaching has been unclear and ineffective the church has been impotent. However, when preaching has been sound and anointed the church has been powerful. Therefore, effective preaching is essential to the Christian faith.

Preaching consists of several components. One component involves the biblical text. The proclamation of the gospel should derive from a particular passage of Scripture. Another component of preaching is the sermon's title. Dr. Miles Jones, former professor at Virginia Union University School of Theology, stated the title is the "distilled essence of the sermon."<sup>4</sup> A person should be able to determine what a sermon will entail as a result of hearing its title. A sermon's title should be attractive to the listener in order to create interest and excitement. In particular, upon reading Samuel Proctor's *The Certain*

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<sup>2</sup> Luke 4:18-19

<sup>3</sup> John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, 7.

<sup>4</sup> Miles Jones, *PT 533 Introduction to Sermon Preparation and Worship Course* (Richmond, VA: The Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology, Virginia Union University), Fall, 1999.

*Sound of the Trumpet*, the researcher became familiar with other elements that comprise a sermon.<sup>5</sup> To set the course for the sermon, it is important for the preacher to establish a proposition. The proposition should be a shorter version of the sermon's thesis and it should be a positive or affirmative statement. The preacher should tailor the proposition so that it is relevant to the parishioner. In addition, according to Proctor, the proposition and the sermon's subject should complement each other. Upon forming a strong proposition, it is advantageous for the preacher to organize an antithesis. In contrast to the thesis, the antithesis represents the "real." It represents the condition of existence within the text. Initially, Dr. Proctor recommends using the antithesis initially in order to attract the listener's ear. However, to reduce predictability, the preacher should interchange the thesis and antithesis to avoid losing the listener's attention. As noted earlier, the proposition serves as a condensed version of the thesis. Thus, the thesis represents the direction and focus of the sermon. It exemplifies the "ideal" of the message and seeks to answer the questions raised by the antithesis. Upon recognizing the negatives in society, the preacher uses the thesis to provoke the listener to emulate the "positive" in the sermon. The success of the sermon relies upon the strength of the thesis. The final two components that comprise the dialectical method are the relevant question and the synthesis.

The relevant question is vital to the process because its task is to connect the thesis to the main body of the sermon. It allows the preacher to form points within the message that will address the sermon's thesis. Therefore, the sermon's synthesis is an outgrowth of the points derived by the preacher. Here, the preacher seeks to provide

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<sup>5</sup> Samuel D. Proctor, *The Certain Sound of the Trumpet* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1994).

answers to the relevant question. Upon hearing the sermon, the parishioner should have relevant information to assist them in realizing the “ideal.” Dr. Proctor mentioned that it is the preacher’s responsibility to use scholarship, competency, spiritual insight and interpretation skills to address the issues that parishioners are experiencing. In addition to causing unbelievers to repent and accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, preaching should also encourage, uplift and empower individuals. Although preaching can be utilized to convert unbelievers to Jesus Christ, it also can be used to encourage discipleship.

Within Christianity, discipleship refers to a person who is a follower of Jesus Christ. On the contrary, membership relates to a person who comes to church primarily for attendance. This distinction is significant for the researcher since his desire is to transition college students and young adults from membership to discipleship. A disciple pertains to a person who has been sent on behalf of someone else. In the New Testament, the term was primarily used to identify those who were learners or pupils of the Lord. Jesus initially gave this title to the twelve individuals that followed Him during His ministry. The twelve served as his representatives who were commissioned to preach, cast out demons and heal various diseases. “It was the task of the disciple to learn, study, and pass along the sayings and teachings of the master.”<sup>6</sup> It was also one’s responsibility to dedicate themselves to interpreting the Scripture and religious tradition imparted by the master or rabbi. In the course of time, a disciple would similarly present the traditions to others.

Making disciples involves several factors. These factors include the principle of selection, association and instruction. As modeled by Jesus, the selection of disciples

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<sup>6</sup> Trent Butler, *Holman Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 1991), 364.

requires prayer. “One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles.”<sup>7</sup> It’s important to note that Jesus chose individuals from various backgrounds so others could identify with them. “In our making disciples, we should not select only those who are like us in temperament and personality. Nor should we choose only those who act in a certain way that we find agreeable to our personal lives and acceptance standards. It would be a good idea to have some “roughnecks” on the team as well as some scholars and quiet types.”<sup>8</sup> The principle of association consists of an individual being with Jesus. In order to train His followers Jesus encouraged relationship. “He appointed twelve – designating them apostles – that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach.”<sup>9</sup> Throughout the Old Testament, you discover how the principle of association was utilized for developing followers. God instructed Moses to train Joshua for future leadership. He guided Elijah to choose Elisha to carry on his work. Likewise, Jesus chose disciples to spend time with Him so they would be able to continue the mission that God placed in His spirit. Thus, those who desire to lead have to be willing to serve and those who aspire to train must spend quality time in relationship with others. In addition to selection and association, Jesus spent time providing instruction to his disciples. Upon giving them authority over evil spirits he informed his followers “Take nothing for the journey except a staff – no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. Wear sandals but not an extra tunic. Whenever

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<sup>7</sup> Luke 6:12-13

<sup>8</sup> Leroy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), 30.

<sup>9</sup> Mark 3:14

you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave, as a testimony against them.”<sup>10</sup> On numerous occasions He set apart time to give direction to his disciples. He encouraged them to pray, fellowship, witness and obey His commands. Since the researcher has provided his theology on discipleship he will elaborate on his theology of transition and transformation.

In order to gain understanding on transition and transformation, the researcher utilized Ron Martoia’s *Morph!*<sup>11</sup> “The word *formed* in the New International Version is the Greek word *morphe* – where we get our word *morph*.”<sup>12</sup> The apostle Paul used a version of this word when he declared, “My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you.”<sup>13</sup> Paul also stated, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”<sup>14</sup> This passage refers to spiritual growth or formation and “the word transformed is *metamorphe*.”<sup>15</sup> It is a term that is often applied to the transfiguration of Jesus in the Gospels.<sup>16</sup> God shapes our lives through transformation to prepare us for future assignments. In the Old Testament,<sup>17</sup> God is likened to a potter because He molds us into

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ron Martoia, *Morph!* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing Inc., 2003), 10.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Gal. 4:19

<sup>14</sup> Rom. 12:2

<sup>15</sup> Martoia, *Morph!*, 10.

<sup>16</sup> Luke 9:28-36

<sup>17</sup> Jer. 18:1-4

the persons He's created us to be. As His workmanship, we are constantly being transformed to connect with our destiny.

In reading *Morph*, the researcher discovered that transformation consists of "information, incubation and application or re-habituating."<sup>18</sup> Information relates to the Word of God. Instead of reading for knowledge, one should read to develop and maintain relationship with God. "Morphing starts with the right stuff going in."<sup>19</sup> "Incubation is being placed in the right climate, temperature, and surroundings to let the information warm up and mature inside us."<sup>20</sup> Some practices of incubation include, but are not limited to, meditation, study, small group meetings and one-on-one discussions. By utilizing these means, a person can have a personal encounter with God which can bring about a significant change in their life. Application or re-habituating "is the simple re-patterning of the way we do things."<sup>21</sup> It involves a change in behavior through the move of the Holy Spirit. A person's response should reflect that of Jesus' once incubation has taken place. Essentially, evidence should be displayed to reflect the work of God in our lives.

The author discussed various transitions that have taken place within society and churches that have helped companies and congregations remain relevant and on the cutting edge. He talked about the shifts that have been made within technology. Prior to the 1970's, "VCR's, pocket calculators, LCD watches and personal computers" were

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<sup>18</sup> Martoia, *Morph!*, 60.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 58.



non-existent.<sup>22</sup> Today, however, these technological advancements along with others have contributed in transforming society. Likewise, the church has also made a transition by using technology to transform ministry. Presently, “satellite technology enables whole services to be piped to remote locations.”<sup>23</sup> Thus, worship experiences, conferences and workshops can be offered via satellite. In relation to college students and young adults, it’s critical for the church to utilize technology since this generation embraces various inventions pertaining to this field. Today, a person can download a worship service on their MP3 player or I-pod or they can visit a website for the same purpose. The researcher recognizes the significance of these means of communication because they can be utilized for the purpose of preaching for discipleship. Paul stated, “To the Jews I became a like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.”<sup>24</sup> In order to reach the young adult generation, like Paul, the church must be willing to make a transition in its approach to ministry. The researcher believes other options of communications should be employed by the church to reach college students and young adults. “A very small percentage of them have grown up with a church experience. Many of them have absolutely no religious moorings of any

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>24</sup> 1 Cor. 9:20-22

sort.”<sup>25</sup> Thus, these various lines of communication will provide the church an opportunity to transform a generation.

Since the researcher’s ministry comprises of college students and young adults, he familiarized himself with *The Hip-Hop Church*. Therefore, he seeks to define hip-hop, its theology and its relevance to the church.

To begin, hip-hop is a culture. “Hip-hop is about dance, art, expression, pain, love, racism, broken families, hard times, the search for God and overcoming.”<sup>26</sup> Hip-hop is not just about a music form, but it includes such elements as an emcee, deejay, fashion, language, visual art and business. It comprises the culture of African Americans, Latinos and urban America. The establishment of hip-hop is primarily attributed to young people that grew up between the period of 1965 and 1985. “Hip-hop arose against the South Bronx’s backdrop of poverty, tension over economic injustices, social injustice and social change.”<sup>27</sup> Due to the construction of the Cross-Bronx Expressway in the 1950s, which led to jobs and middle-class residents moving to the suburbs, poverty and unemployment became widespread. Hip-hop was birthed out of this climate. Hip-hop utilized music to express its struggles due to the affect of this building project.

As mentioned earlier, hip-hop involves several components. A deejay is one of those components. “This person mixes records and often uses the record itself as the instrument by scratching it against the needle.”<sup>28</sup> Kool Herc, originally from Kingston,

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<sup>25</sup> Martoia, *Morph!*, 15.

<sup>26</sup> Efrem Smith and Phil Jackson, *The Hip-Hop Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 61.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

Jamaica, relocated to New York in 1968 and introduced this skill to aspiring deejays.

Grandmaster Flash was another deejay that contributed to this art form in 1977.

Eventually, Melle Mel and the Furious Five became his rap group. Another component of hip-hop is the emcee. "This artist gets on the microphone and chants verses that rhyme or phrases that don't rhyme but that rhythmically flow with the music. These lyrics tell a story, teach morals or history, give a report on street life, or celebrate life."<sup>29</sup> Breaking consists of young men and women coordinating dance moves and spinning to the music that deejays played. Graffiti artists were another element within the hip-hop culture.

Persons would create artwork on trains, walls and vacated buildings by using spray paint.

The beat box is an additional element within the culture of hip-hop. Artists like Doug E. Fresh, the Fat Boyz and Biz Markie used their mouth to create unique beats. Fashion is a key component of the hip-hop generation. In the 1980's, the rap group Run-DMC created an image by wearing "black jeans, black shirt, black hat and white Adidas with no shoestrings."<sup>30</sup> Today, hip-hop fashion has evolved to include such companies as Sean John, Enyce, Phat Farm and RocaWear.

In regard to spirituality, Afrika Bambaataa started the Zulu Nation. He sought to establish peace in the "hood" by using hip-hop music and dance. "He adopted principles of the Zulu people, which included unity, love, happiness, fun and discipline, and created a positive connection with people who were seeking refuge from the streets."<sup>31</sup> It is important for Christians to recognize this aspect of hip-hop because a person could use it

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

as a means of connecting and sharing the gospel. In addition to Afrika Bambaataa, various hip-hop artists such as De la Soul, KRS-ONE and the Fugees have promoted spirituality in their lyrics.

Hip-hop spirituality is closely related to liberation theology. It involves two phases. These phases consist of self-awareness and restoration. “Hip-hop liberation is found in personal self-awareness when an emcee is spitting (rapping) about a place of personal reflection and affirms that new decisions must be made for a destructive cycle to stop.”<sup>32</sup> Essentially, this outlook can be related to sin and the need for repentance. At some point, those within hip-hop seek to discover their identity. Therefore, a love relationship with Jesus Christ becomes ideal. In relation to restoration, persons pursue a relationship with God after their own agenda reaches a dead end. Similar to the prodigal son, individuals in hip-hop return to the church for restoration. The expressions of self awareness and restoration are avenues the church can utilize to connect with the hip-hop generation.

Hip-hop theology relates to justice and power. “Too often the church has failed to be proactive in communities that lack sufficient economic, health and other resources.”<sup>33</sup> Justice and power are other avenues that can connect the church and the hip-hop generation. In addition, human struggle and pain needs addressing as well. Due to a lack of teaching on the humanity of Jesus persons within the hip-hop community feel that Christianity can’t address their issues. “It is in Jesus’ incarnation that we can connect to his deity – in the reality that Jesus got mad, was poor, dealt with ridicule and disdain. If

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 124.

there is not solid teaching on the humanity of Christ, we see him as a God who is supposed to fix stuff in our life but not a God who can empathize with temptation we face.”<sup>34</sup> The church has to seek ways, through God’s Word, to be relevant to the culture of hip-hop.

There are some practical ways of reaching the hip-hop community for Jesus Christ. Prayer, a core team, programming, marketing and preaching are some key avenues that can be used to accomplish this task. The House Church, an exclusive youth and young adult hip-hop church in Chicago, utilized these key areas to connect with the hip-hop generation. Initially, prayer should be used to gain direction from God about implementing ministry for persons within hip-hop. You should spend quality time in His presence with interested persons in order to receive guidance. Next, a team of leaders need to be equipped to organize the ministry. The House Church consisted of three different teams. The structural core team handled administration issues such as filing for not-for-profit 501(c)(3) status. They also were responsible for securing a bank for the church. The service team was accountable for spreading the word to their peers and organizing the service. Besides praying for the ministry, the prayer team provides counseling and intercedes for others needing prayer. The programming team ensures that the Word of God is priority in the teaching, rap and song. They also are responsible for creating ways for the congregation to be involved in the service. Furthermore, they make sure that every learning style is addressed by having various modes of communication. For example, The House Church uses PowerPoint throughout the service to minister to the people. The marketing team is primarily responsible for publicizing the worship service. They use word of mouth, radio spots and flyers as a means of advertisement.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 126.

Finally, the gospel is preached for about forty-five minutes. The Word of God is uniquely proclaimed in three fifteen minute intervals during the worship experience.

There are additional ways the church can connect with the hip-hop culture. Some include spoken word, deejay classes and justice issues. Other avenues consist of outreach concerts, graffiti and business skills classes.

### **Theological Foundation**

In order to minister effectively, the writer believes it is imperative to present sound doctrine. Therefore, he will discuss the various doctrines that have been instrumental in shaping his theology. He will also share how these beliefs assist him in preaching for discipleship among college students and young adults.

In Alister McGrath's *Christian Theology*, Paul Tillich suggested that theology failed to consider the religious dimension of a person's culture.<sup>35</sup> His corrective to the direction of theology was the "correlational method."<sup>36</sup> It proposes that philosophy and theology should complement each other. He believed that the philosophy's task was to formulate questions of "ultimate concern" and theology's role was to dialogue with philosophy and come up with satisfactory responses to questions raised. Thus, he concluded that the task of modern theology was to establish a conversation between human culture and Christian faith. For Tillich, existential questions or "ultimate questions" are revealed by human culture.<sup>37</sup> Modern philosophy, writing, and the creative

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<sup>35</sup> Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology – An Introduction* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1997).

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

arts point to questions that concern humans. Theology then formulates answers to these questions, and by doing so it correlates the gospel to modern culture. The researcher believes Tillich's view is imperative for his project because in order to preach relevant messages to persons within his context, he has to understand their culture so he can relate it appropriately to scripture.

In an effort to liberate women and the downtrodden from various factors that oppressed them the researcher feels it is vital to understand their perspective. As a result of becoming familiar with those factors, he believes he will become better equipped to preach effectively to women and the disenfranchised within his ministry. One of the problems recognized in theology is the silence of the woman's voice. As a feminist theologian, Letty Russell is not only an advocate for the liberation of women but she also seeks freedom for others that are oppressed. Thus, she is universal in her practice. For women to experience liberation, Russell encourages them to search out and clarify the critical issues and raise the important questions concerning the Biblical and ecclesiastical traditions of the faith. They must take prophetic action that will constantly disturb the status quo attitudes and consciousness of the church and society. Russell revises Christian categories that have been handed down by the male patriarchal church and culture by naming them from a feminist perspective. To experience true humanity, Russell states that a person must find a meaningful past and support in community. Finally, they must recognize themselves as a subject and not as an object. Russell believes that myths and language should be explored in the search for a usable history. According to Russell, the search for new forms of expressions of God must begin with the interpretation of *Tradition* as found in the Biblical record. Russell's stance is embraced by the researcher

because it encourages him to find specific scriptures that can be proclaimed to help liberate women and the disenfranchised from oppressive situations within the church and society.

James Cone, Professor of Systematic Theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, sought to advocate a faith revealed in politics.<sup>38</sup> Cone's distinct emphasis is introducing liberation of the poor, specifically the black poor, as the controlling key or norm of a political black theology. He wrote to reveal that the liberation of the black poor is at the core of the gospel. Cone admonished a black theology that sought power for oppressed black people, a power that would be used to eliminate racist oppression and to enhance African American freedom. Presently, he remains committed to a black theology that uses cultural resources for political movement. God's liberation of African-American people through Christ's cross and resurrection pinpoint the core of Cone's Christology.

For Cone, the New Testament witness reveals Jesus' person as the oppressed one. Since black people suffocate under extreme difficulties, the center of Jesus' work is a black Christ identified with liberation from black suffering. Cone's political doctrine of Jesus adds a new dimension. In order to fight white theology, he brings together both the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith to complement the liberation theme. Cone creates new political meaning in the crucifixion and resurrection around the theme of liberation. Jesus' death and resurrection reveal that God is present in all dimensions of human liberation. Cone also believed that Christ died on the cross and rose from the dead to liberate the poor and the oppressed in direct opposition to the spirit of evil on the earth.

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<sup>38</sup> James H. Cone and Gayraud S. Gilmore, *Black Theology: A Documentary History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993).



Thus, the identity and work of Christ express the divine intent to liberate the oppressed. In reference to reconciliation, Cone encourages blacks to fight white oppression. For whites, reconciliation can be experienced by coming to God through black people - the place where Jesus is leading a movement of freedom.<sup>39</sup> The researcher identifies with the views of Cone since his context primarily consists of African-Americans. He understands that it is important to preach Jesus Christ to individuals within his ministry since Christ sought to liberate the oppressed and disinherited. Indeed, preaching Jesus Christ will help African Americans deal with the racism and prejudice they experience and it will encourage them to use Him to address various injustices.

The researcher incorporated some additional theologies to assist him in preaching for discipleship among young adults. They consist of womanist theology, neo-orthodox theology, existential theology and narrative theology. Common elements found within these theologies pertain to an inductive method and the realm of perspective. The inductive method tends to be experimental in character – using tentative hypotheses and frequently revising its questions to fit a changing, dynamic environment. It involves action and reflection (praxis). There are at least three perspectives that relate to the various theologies mentioned above. The first is the conviction that the Biblical message for this age demands the liberation of all people. Christians can no longer draw lines of distinction between themselves, confessional groups and non-Christians. They must support and join others who struggle for justice, peace and freedom. The second perspective shared by these theologies is that history takes on meaning as people and the world participate in its processes. In the Bible, the world is viewed as moving through a series of significant events that will ultimately bring about the fulfillment of God's plan

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<sup>39</sup> James H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986).

for humankind. The third perspective shared among these theologies is that of salvation as total well being in community with others. Here, the Old Testament concept of “shalom” or wholeness is often used to emphasize the social character of salvation and stress is placed upon salvation as a quality of the here and now. Common themes pertaining to womanist theology, neo-orthodox theology, existential theology and narrative theology are humanization, conscientization and dialogue and community. Humanization comprises of the need to be accepted as a subject, not as an object or thing that is manipulated by others. It also involves the need to participate in the shaping and understanding of the world in which the individual find themselves and the need of a supportive community. Conscientization refers to the continuing process of the importance of becoming aware of the kind of world in which people live and the constant readiness to take action against all the oppressive elements of that world. It is a positive approach for helping people to develop their own future. Dialogue, or mutual trust and respect, enables the development of true community. Dialogue can take place only within a situation where there is mutual respect and trust. This means that the oppressed groups must initially establish a power base, a strong sense of identity and the potential of affective collective action against the oppressor.

In liberation theology, the focus is on anthropology. Thus, experience is vital. Liberation theology is concerned with the everyday life of the people. This also includes its spiritual dimensions. In liberation theology, theologies are attempts by concrete believers to respond to singular experiences. It utilizes a usable past to create futures. In regard to existence, liberation implies the freedom to be responsible to others. Also, liberation is viewed as total well being in community with others. It is the fruit of life in

community, of shared faith, and of multiple efforts, and it should be acknowledged and encouraged as such, as a shared responsibility of all members of a believing, Spirit-filled human community.

In reference to Afrocentricity, experience is imperative. Afrocentricity is initially an orientation, location, position, or perspective that allows Africa and her children to be subjects of historical experiences. It is an orientation centering concepts, ideas, and being in a specific cultural context that affirms that “Africans” are active, creative, human agents who do not require legitimization by “Europe.” Similar to liberation theology, within Afrocentricity a person exists in community with others. The social ethic is one of the sharing of spirit, food, money, land, power, and other resources with people.

Process theology is experiential. Actual entities are said to be “occasions of experience.” The experience doesn’t need to be conscious; consciousness is a very high level of experience, which arises only in high - grade occasions of experience. In process theology, a person can speak of human religious experience as one in which God is directly experienced and thereby becomes incarnate in the person. Existence is essentially relational and interdependent in process theology.

In relation to evangelical theology, experience is not acknowledged. The gospel is considered the essential content of scripture, which has primacy over church tradition as well as religious experience. Evangelicals have a low anthropology and a high Christology. In regard to existence, evangelicals embrace separatism. They tend to avoid exposure to secular culture or cooperation with secular groups in order to maintain personal piety. Furthermore, they tend to avoid cooperation with mainline denominations or enter into ecumenical dialogue so that they might maintain doctrinal purity and the

integrity of their worship by worshipping exclusively with those who are truly born-again.

Upon reading excerpts from James H. Evans, Jr.'s *We Have Been Believers: An African American Systematic Theology*, Shirley C. Guthrie's *Christian Doctrine*, Alister E. McGrath's *Christian Theology*, and Daniel L. Migliore's *Faith Seeking Understanding* the researcher has established his own beliefs regarding anthropology, Christology, and soteriology. In addition, the researcher has also formed his ideology in respect to the church and the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, this research has allowed him to form his convictions in relation to the Trinity. Hereafter, he intends to express his views about those doctrinal areas.

To begin, the researcher believes there are three dimensions of human existence. In *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*, Daniel L. Migliore, informs readers that these dimensions comprise of the created, fallen, and redeemed nature of humankind.<sup>40</sup> It is the researcher's belief that humankind was "created in the image of God" for the ultimate purpose of bringing glory to His name. In order to operate or function in the manner God has ordained for one's life it's necessary for every human being to establish and maintain a relationship with their Creator. Consequently, the researcher believes the ideal world or a "new heaven and new earth" can be realized if each individual administered the tasks God has purposed for their lives. In the researcher's estimation, the world is corrupt because as Rev. Johnny Ray

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<sup>40</sup> Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company), 123.

Youngblood states “we have too many Jonahs.”<sup>41</sup> There are a substantial number of people that aren’t living out God’s will for their lives. This type of behavior can be noticed from people inside and outside of the church. Consequently, we have a significant amount of individuals that are a part of the fallen state of humanity.

All of us, at some time or another, have found ourselves in the fallen state of human existence. This position within human existence relates to the fact that we may have failed to meet the expectations that God has for our lives. Essentially, we function at a level that is antithetical to what we are supposed to represent. In the Christian arena, we define this sort of behavior as “sin.” Sin is a product of separation. There are a variety of ways in which sin is manifested. When one participates in areas such as racism, sexism, and classism, he or she is operating in a manner that is contradictory to their created nature. Furthermore, when a person gives priority to someone or something other than God, bears false witness against another individual, covets their neighbor’s household, or commits adultery, he or she is participating in activities that are inconsistent with their created purpose. Thus, the individual is separated from God since the Eternal is forever the same. Inasmuch as our sins are incompatible to the nature of God, the researcher proposes that such behavior is ungodly. Nevertheless, it is by the grace of God that humanity is allowed to redeem itself from this fallen state. When the Holy Spirit makes one aware of their rebellious ways the individual can redeem him or herself, through the grace of God in Jesus Christ, by responding positively to the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>41</sup> Johnny Ray Youngblood, “John Malcus Ellison Fall Convocation Lecture” (Richmond, VA: Virginia Union University, 2001).

Grace serves as the medium by which humanity can return to its original relationship with God.<sup>42</sup> When the researcher consider the components of the gospel, life represents mankind's created nature, death symbolizes our fallen state, and resurrection is indicative of our restored position in Jesus Christ. The researcher believes that humanity conquers death just as Jesus did as a result of resurrecting itself from its fallen state. For instance, prior to a person becoming addicted to drugs the individual experienced life. The individual entered the "death" stage as a result of participating in sinful activity. However, when an individual resurrects him or herself by the grace of God through Jesus Christ, the individual experiences life once again. A person should not put emphasis on their fallen state. On the contrary, importance should be placed on how an individual responds to their fallen state. When one realizes the power of Jesus' resurrection from the grave they can redeem themselves and return to their original position.

Next, the researcher's focus will be on humankind's relationship with God. As a follower of God, the researcher believes the Eternal resides within us. Through the birth of Jesus, God made us aware that we have the ability to become all that He ordained for us. At the same time, He let humankind know that He is not a hierarchical God whereby He rules over them.<sup>43</sup> Conversely, He is Immanuel or "God with us." No longer do we have to search for Him externally but we can now take advantage of a God that dwells internally. During the researcher's seminary experience at Virginia Union, Dr. Miles Jones provided an illustration that displayed how God's desire is to have a linear relationship with humanity. It is His inclination for us to be one with Him. God does not

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<sup>42</sup> Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology – An Introduction* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1997), 21.

<sup>43</sup> "Introduction to Sermon Preparation and Worship," Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology, Virginia Union University Fall 1999.

want us to feel as if we are beneath Him because it would mean that we are inferior to Him. Consequently, if He were Immanuel, it would mean that He is ultimately over Himself.

Although God resides within us, the researcher believes that humankind must participate in various components to ensure that we capitalize from God's self. This may be accomplished by reading scripture, prayer and meditation. Other ways this can be achieved are by attending church for the purpose of Sunday school, Bible study and worship service. Accordingly, a person can become competent with the activity of God and will be able to discern His voice from the adversary. Through the study of scripture, one realizes that God constantly revealed Himself. When you consider the pilgrimage of the Israelites, you notice that God showed up as a creator, provider, deliverer, healer, and protector. By the same token, in our own journey, we have been blessed to observe some of God's attributes. The component of prayer allows a person to have a conversation with God. This not only assists the individual in walking in God's will, but it also gives them an opportunity to express their concerns to the Divine. In reference to worship service, the researcher believes God utilizes the choir and preacher to allow parishioners to understand that He is with them in the midst of their circumstances. Although there is an ideal relationship that humanity should have with God, there is also an association that humankind should retain with his or her peers.

As God's creation, human beings are created for one another.<sup>44</sup> Regardless of their individuality, humanity can't be realized until an individual celebrates community with someone else. Humankind has certain needs that can only be addressed by another

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<sup>44</sup> Daniel Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding – An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company), 125.

person. There are unique gifts and talents that each person possesses that will assist humankind in becoming “whole.” Thus, self-centeredness has no place in our community. As a result of attending seminary, the researcher has adopted the saying “I am because we are.”

### **Historical Foundation**

In this section of the paper, it is the researcher’s intention to elaborate on how Jesus is utilized as the paradigm or model for Christianity, how He acts as a liberator, the nature of Jesus’ humanity and divinity, and how one can be saved through Him.

To begin, the researcher believes that Jesus Christ serves as the paradigm or model that Christians should follow to fulfill their destiny. The researcher agrees with the Gospel that Jesus represents the new covenant.<sup>45</sup> Although Jesus didn’t come to destroy the old covenant or “the law,” it was His intention to fulfill it by encouraging persons to establish and maintain an intimate relationship with God. Jesus, therefore, sought to lead individuals back to “paradise.” His consistent prayer life, moments of meditation, and periods of studying “the word” served as excellent examples for people to follow.

As a follower of Jesus Christ, the researcher can testify that communing with God is a more liberating experience than concentrating on the law and trying to uphold its commands. Whereas the researcher was mentally liberated through the teachings of Jesus, he also believes that Jesus sought to liberate the disenfranchised and oppressed from their social, political, economical, and physical state of being.

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<sup>45</sup> Heb. 8:6-13



Throughout His ministry, Jesus endeavored to free persons that had been negated due to unfair practices within society.<sup>46</sup> The researcher feels that Jesus sought to have the oppressed viewed and treated like human beings. We noticed this being accomplished on numerous occasions when Jesus healed afflicted persons of their diseases or ailments<sup>47</sup>. Once considered an outcast by society, the individual became free to participate in activities he or she was barred from previously. Thus, Jesus seeks to liberate the oppressed so they can live life to the fullest. Similarly, the researcher also feels Jesus' aim was to liberate the oppressor from administering unfair practices. As a result, oppressors could free themselves from conforming to the norm within society. In addition, the researcher believes that Jesus sought to free people as a freedom fighter. When the researcher considers the context of Jesus' time, he recognized Jesus pursued liberation "by any means necessary." The researcher recognizes how critical things were when he was informed by the gospel that Peter used a sword to cut off a Roman official's ear.<sup>48</sup> The researcher's perception of Jesus as a warrior is also formed by some of His other disciples. When the researcher considers that James and John were referred to as the Sons of Thunder and when he reflects on the mentality of the "Zealots" he recognizes that Simon along with the other disciples assisted Jesus in His quest for freedom. The researcher realizes this is a non-traditional view of Jesus but he can not dismiss the social, political and military context of His day. One instance that intrigued the researcher involved an incident where Jesus' opponents surrounded him. Yet, one is informed that He walked between them unharmed. The researcher doesn't believe that the occasion in

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<sup>46</sup> Luke 13:10-17

<sup>47</sup> Mark 1:29-34

<sup>48</sup> John 18:10

Gethsemane was the first time Peter held a sword. Therefore, in the instance above, the researcher believes Peter along with the other disciples created a secure pathway for Jesus. The researcher is reminded that Jesus' disciples not only consisted of the "Twelve," but they also included individuals that followed Him after He taught and performed various miracles. This is evidenced by the time when He sent out the seventy-two disciples.<sup>49</sup> Essentially, Jesus recognized that in order to liberate people from Roman oppression He needed a strong entourage. The researcher is intrigued that prior to visiting Jerusalem, Jesus performed ministry in places where He knew people would be willing to support Him against Roman authorities.

Next, it is the researcher's goal to elaborate on Jesus' humanity and divinity. He earnestly feels that Jesus was human. Though the researcher believes He was fully human, he also feels that He fulfilled His potential by capitalizing on His divinity. There are several instances in the New Testament where one can distinguish the humanity and divinity of Jesus. After being tempted in the wilderness by the adversary for a great deal of time without food Jesus experienced hunger and weakness. Yet, He was able to withstand the devil and His deficiencies as a result of Scripture and fasting. On several occasions one discovers that Jesus sought a solitary place and prayed to God for restoration. He showed his human side by crying after the death of Lazarus, but he also exercised his divine nature when He resurrected him from the dead.<sup>50</sup> His human nature was displayed when He marched into the temple and turned over tables. However, His divinity was manifested when He taught individuals as one having "authority." The researcher believes God birthed Jesus so humankind could recognize their divine power.

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<sup>49</sup> Luke 10:1-24

<sup>50</sup> John 11:17-44

Jesus was conceived so that humankind could truly live. The fact that He was chosen as the paradigm for Christianity indicates there was something awesome about Him. His life was so special that the Christian community conceded that the life He lived was worth undertaking. In this section, the researcher has expounded on the humanity and divinity of Jesus. Next, he will discuss his beliefs about salvation.

Salvation is more than making a confession statement about one's belief in Jesus Christ and being baptized. In short, salvation entails repenting from our wayward lifestyles and practices so that we can live the way God purposed for us to live. Essentially, this action will liberate the oppressed as well as the oppressor. As believers, we can also help people realize salvation by meeting them where they hurt. Whether it's a physical, mental, political or economical malady that needs addressing we have the ability to ensure salvation for an individual. As mentioned above, the researcher believes Jesus' life serves as the paradigm or model for individuals to realize salvation.

In respect to the Kingdom, the researcher believes the proclamation of the Gospel is a vital component of the church. Ultimately, through preaching the good news of the Kingdom, the preacher seeks to lead unbelievers to Christ so they can discover God's will for their lives. Preaching is also utilized to provide principles to parishioners that will assist them in their daily living. The time of proclamation is used to encourage, uplift, motivate and inspire individuals that have their "backs against the wall." The lay member learns through proclamation that despite their adversity God is on their side. This sort of preaching is intended to comfort the parishioner and help them run on a little further. In particular, proclamation in the black church is used to address social and political injustices in the community. Matters such as unfair hiring practices, inadequate

funding of black public schools and racial profiling are addressed by the preacher during the time of proclamation. These type of situations are dealt with by the preacher to not only keep the laity aware of oppressive situations, but to also inform them of how they can participate with God to ensure that justice is realized. Although marches are very familiar within the black church, the Pastor also encourages members to boycott certain businesses that advocate unfair practices. Furthermore, members sign petitions and write their political representative in order to address various injustices.

In addition to proclamation, a spirit of koinonia should be promoted within the church. Koinonia refers to community or fellowship. The researcher believes it is imperative for the church to embrace and practice koinonia or fellowship. Although the secular community encourages independence, the Pastor should promote community when afforded. It is important for parishioners to understand that God created us for one another.

To promote community within the church, one can implement various events and activities. Besides general worship and the ordinances of baptism and communion, occasions such as picnics and walk-a-thons will provide additional opportunities for the church to assemble as a community. A church picnic provides an environment for individuals to play games and fellowship with each other. Similarly, a walk-a-thon brings the church community together in an effort to support a worthy cause. The congregation not only unites as a group but it also participates in an event to raise money for the downtrodden in the community.

Another vital component of the church pertains to the service it extends to the surrounding community. One of the mandates of the church relates to meeting the needs

of the people. It is incumbent upon the church to visit the sick and shut in, feed the hungry and clothe the naked. Today, one notices that the vision for providing ministry to persons in the community has enlarged. The church is participating in programs such as Habitat for Humanity in an effort to provide adequate and affordable housing for individuals with meager incomes. Young boys and girls are being blessed with love and financial support as a result of the church adopting them through the One Church One Child program.

The next component that should be rendered by the church relates to *didache* or education. *Didache* comprises of teaching or instruction. Sunday school and Bible study are perhaps the most prevalent ways of educating individuals within the church. During these sessions, a person receives instruction on how to live their life. The educational component within the church is imperative because it assists in shaping the moral values of a person. In addition to Sunday school and Bible study, teaching moments can take place in various ministries within the church. Thus, an individual can become familiar with certain issues while participating in the children's ministry, youth ministry, young adult ministry, music ministry and married couple's ministry. Besides receiving biblical teaching, a person can become educated on issues related to health, finances, home buying, insurance and several other relevant areas.

Today, the black church is beginning to take advantage of its member's expertise. Within the African American church, a person can witness doctors and nurses from the congregation implement the health care ministry team. These individuals collaborate with one another in an effort to provide persons with pertinent information pertaining to one's health. They inform individuals in regard to the proper nutrition and recommend foods

that help reduce the risk of certain cancers. They also advise persons about how food should be prepared in order to reduce one's risk of having a heart attack. Ultimately, this ministry seeks to inform persons of ways to remain healthy. In addition, they provide information on high blood pressure, stress, sexually transmitted diseases, prostate cancer and other health related issues. In relation to finances, the church obtains the service of Certified Public Accountants and other members with a credible business background to assist people with tax returns, home ownership, money management and entrepreneurship.

*Leiturgia* refers to the church carrying out its pastoral vocation of worship and prayer. The researcher believes worship should be diverse. In regards to music, he feels it would be wise for the church to render traditional and contemporary offerings. As a result, the needs of each parishioner should be addressed. In addition to traditional and contemporary music, the researcher also believes the music ministry should sing traditional spirituals in an effort to keep persons cognizant of their heritage. Moreover, he feels praise dancers should be utilized to support the choir during the worship hour.

In this section, the researcher will elaborate on his belief regarding the Holy Spirit. He believes the Holy Spirit embodies God's self within a person. The Holy Spirit enables an individual to do things they could not otherwise do on their own. It enables a person to realize the potential that God has placed within them. Whether it's preaching, teaching or singing, the Holy Spirit seeks to assist the individual in utilizing his or her gift. The Holy Spirit also instructs a person in making decisions. When a person is faced with making choices the Holy Spirit empowers them to discern the option within God's will. The researcher feels proper decisions will be made as a result of persons engaging

the Bible because the Holy Spirit will recall principles that have been learned. In addition, the Holy Spirit seeks to comfort individuals in distress. When worry and doubt seem to cloud an individual's mind the Holy Spirit acts as comforting presence.

It is the researcher's belief that God is a Spirit and the Creator of life. He prefers not to limit God by referring to Him as Father. Since God is a Spirit the researcher believes that God reveals Himself in various ways. He formed this view based upon God's reference to Himself as "I Am Who I Am."<sup>51</sup> For the most part, this suggests that a person cannot limit God to a name because God is always revealing Himself in many forms. According to the circumstance or situation, God revealed Himself to the Israelites in a way they needed Him.<sup>52</sup> There were occasions when God served as their protector, deliverer and guide and there were instances in which God manifested Himself as a Father and Mother.<sup>53</sup> Often times in the church you will hear the preacher refer to God as a doctor in the sickroom, a lawyer in the courtroom and a shelter in the time of a storm. These attributes are indicative of the various ways that God has revealed Himself in people lives. A significant amount of laity can relate to God as a healer. Others can testify that God has acted as a protector. Furthermore, persons can identify with the fact that God served as their provider on numerous occasions. Likewise, people have called upon the Lord to assist them in certain matters. Lay members agree that Jesus is a "bridge over troubled waters," "lily in the valley," "bread when they're hungry," and "water when they're thirsty." Accordingly, Jesus serves as a person's hope in overcoming a hopeless situation. In particular, the disenfranchised and downtrodden can identify with

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<sup>51</sup> Exod. 2:14

<sup>52</sup> Exod. 17:8-15

<sup>53</sup> Joshua 3:1-8

Jesus in order to realize their potential. Since Jesus was born in a manger individuals from deprived backgrounds can use this as motivation for overcoming their situation. Similarly, oppressed individuals can relate to Jesus through His negation by Roman authorities. These occasions serve to remind people that they can conquer adversity. In addition to God revealing Himself through Jesus, He also reveals Himself in the person of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit seeks to empower, encourage and instruct individuals. God, revealed through the Holy Spirit, enables people to accomplish things they couldn't achieve on their own. The Holy Spirit is the element used to discern God's voice. Therefore, it's imperative for the individual to establish and maintain a personal relationship with God so they can experience what God has for them. As a result of spending time with God, a person will be able to discern God's voice and will for their life. Thus, it would be advantageous for a person to commune with God in prayer, through the Word, Bible study and worship service.

### **Biblical Foundation**

In regard to biblical foundations, the researcher seeks to provide various scriptures within the Bible to support his assertion that preaching is necessary for discipleship in relation to college students and young adults. In particular, he will use several passages that pertain to Jesus, as well as Peter and Paul's effort to transform and transition new believers. First, the researcher will elaborate on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.<sup>54</sup> Next, he will expound on Peter's declaration at Pentecost and his message

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<sup>54</sup> Matt. 5:1,7:29



rendered subsequent to the healing of a crippled man.<sup>55</sup> The researcher will also deal with several passages of scripture that relate to Paul's preaching to the Gentile community.<sup>56</sup> Finally, he will refer to various scriptures within the Old Testament to support his claim.

In reference to the Sermon on the Mount as set forth in Matthew 5:1-7:29, Jesus addressed several issues in an effort to encourage a certain ethical and moral lifestyle within the Kingdom. In order for transformation and transition to take place he recognized the importance of deprogramming and reprogramming persons that would follow him. He didn't want culture, tradition and the law to interfere with his ministry so he proclaimed a message to align individuals with his standard. The researcher believes it is important to note that when Jesus' ministry began a significant number of Jews were scattered throughout a Greek and Roman culture. Thus, He preached, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near"<sup>57</sup> because he desired to transform and transition his people. He used the preaching moment to admonish people to follow Him because He wanted them to experience what God ordained for their life. Within the Beatitudes (Mt. 5:3-12), he informed his followers that true happiness comes from embracing God's perspective. His proclamation on the mount also informs the listener that he wanted his disciples to influence the moral and spiritual climate around them. In addition, he wanted them to be spiritually disciplined so that it would be reflected in their character. He also encouraged them to place more value on the treasures of heaven instead of worldly goods. Moreover,

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<sup>55</sup> Acts 2:14-41, 3:1

<sup>56</sup> Acts 11, 1 Cor. 1, 2

<sup>57</sup> Matt. 4:17

he admonished his followers to assess their own lives rather than judging one another and he advised them to deal with others in love in the same manner that God deals with them.

Although Jesus primarily traveled with twelve disciples, a person is made aware from other passages such as Luke 10:1, that he had additional followers. Upon shaping and molding them he was confident enough to send them out to preach, teach, cast out evil spirits and heal all kinds of diseases. Eventually, he commissioned them to go out and make disciples throughout the world. For the most part, this was accomplished through the proclamation of the gospel.

On Pentecost, Peter preached a message that attracted a significant amount of people to the Kingdom. As a result of the disciples' speaking in tongues and everyone hearing them in their own language confusion occurred among those who gathered in Jerusalem. Peter stood up and addressed the crowd by proclaiming,

Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know. Him being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.<sup>58</sup>

Peter continued,

Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. Therefore let all the

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<sup>58</sup> Acts 2:22-24

house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.<sup>59</sup>

Upon hearing Peter's message about the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus one recognizes that three thousand people were added to The Way. Also, a person discovers that those individuals committed themselves to discipleship by remaining steadfast "in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers."<sup>60</sup> In addition, they worshipped together, displayed lifestyle changes by sharing their possessions with one another and they cared for each other's needs. Peter's message is an excellent example of preaching for transformation and transition since a good portion of the new converts were previously connected with other movements, beliefs and doctrines. It was imperative for them to become familiar with the teachings of Jesus to ensure the effectiveness of the Kingdom. The outcome of Peter's proclamation was a partial fulfillment of the promise that the gospel would spread "to the end of the earth."<sup>61</sup>

The researcher also discovered the power of Peter's message after the healing of a crippled man. Upon witnessing the crowd marvel at this miracle, Peter addressed the crowd by saying,

Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our power or godliness we had made this man walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. You killed the author of life, but God

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<sup>59</sup> Acts 2:29-33, 36

<sup>60</sup> Acts 2:42

<sup>61</sup> Acts 1:8

raised him from the dead. By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see. Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you – even Jesus.<sup>62</sup>

Upon hearing this message, one is informed that the number of men increased to around five thousand. Again, as evidenced in Peter's sermon as well as the other apostles, preaching consisted of the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This type of message was very instrumental in converting a significant amount of people to the Kingdom of God.<sup>63</sup>

In addition to Peter, the researcher discovered the role preaching played for Philip in bringing Samaritans to believe in the Lord Jesus. The Samaritans were a group of people that disliked believers, but preaching was the tool that was employed to transform their life.<sup>64</sup> Prior to the eighth chapter in Acts, the church had not left Jerusalem, but persecution became the catalyst to move God's people. After the stoning of Stephen, the church scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria. We're told, "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did."<sup>65</sup> When the apostles heard that Samaria had received the gospel message they sent Peter and John to assess the situation. Upon their approval, Peter and John decided to

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<sup>62</sup> Acts 3:12-16, 19-20

<sup>63</sup> Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal, Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western world in a few centuries* (San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1997).

<sup>64</sup> Acts 8:4-8

<sup>65</sup> Acts 8:5-6

preach the word of God to the Samaritans as well. We're also informed that some more individuals that had scattered after the persecution of Stephen "traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only."<sup>66</sup> But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord."<sup>67</sup> Upon receiving word of what happened in these regions, the apostles commissioned Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. It was there where he discovered that a multiethnic church was born and he brought Paul on board to help him minister to the people.

The Apostle Paul was primarily responsible for spreading the gospel to the Gentile community. He was involved, in some measure, with establishing, influencing and maintaining churches in such areas as Phillipi, Thessalonica, Crete, Ephesus, Corinth, Rome, Achaia, Antioch, Lystra, Iconium and Derbe. He expressed to the church at Corinth "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel – not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."<sup>68</sup> There was a faction within the faith community that questioned Paul's calling because his speech lacked articulation and wisdom. Essentially, Paul defended his calling by informing believers that Christ called him to preach the gospel and he wasn't going to let anything overshadow the power of the cross.<sup>69</sup> He later expressed,

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<sup>66</sup> Acts 11:19

<sup>67</sup> Acts 11:19-21

<sup>68</sup> 1 Cor. 1:17-18

<sup>69</sup> 1 Cor. 1:17

“When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on men’s wisdom, but on God’s power.”<sup>70</sup> Thus, it was Paul’s preaching through the power of the Spirit that was responsible for converting Gentiles to the faith and preparing the body of Christ for transition and transformation.

In addition to preaching being utilized as a mechanism for transition and transformation in the New Testament, it was also employed in the Old Testament through the mouth of God’s prophets. For the most part, God used prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel to call His people to repentance from idolatry, immoral living and other evils. He raised them up to proclaim a message that would sustain them in bondage and prepare them for life upon their release from captivity. God’s desire was for His people to be in right relationship with Him so He sent word through His prophets to address this matter. Isaiah proclaimed, “Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord, though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword.”<sup>71</sup> Isaiah is making Judah aware that forgiveness is possible if they are willing to repent from serving idol gods.

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<sup>70</sup> 1 Cor. 2:1-5

<sup>71</sup> Isa. 1:18-20

In the book of Jeremiah, the prophet outlines a change that would take place between the Lord and His people who were in Babylonian captivity.<sup>72</sup> Jeremiah said,

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah – not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, thought I was a husband to them, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, “Know the Lord”, for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.<sup>73</sup>

As evidenced in this message, God used Jeremiah to get His people ready for a time of transition and transformation within the Kingdom. We find this to be the case in the book of the prophet Ezekiel as well.<sup>74</sup> When God’s people were hopeless in Babylon, Ezekiel was sent by the Lord to prophesy about returning to their own land, the restoration of the temple and the renewal of sacrifices and authentic worship.

In Ezekiel’s famous vision of the valley of dry bones he was commanded to prophesy, stating in pertinent part:

Thus says the Lord God: “Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall

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<sup>72</sup> Jer. 31:31-34 NKJV

<sup>73</sup> Jer. 31:31-34

<sup>74</sup> Ezek. 37:1-14

live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken it and performed it," says the Lord.<sup>75</sup>

Again, God used His prophet to prepare His people for a change that was going to take place within the community.

Historically, Campus Crusade for Christ is a movement that seeks to disciple college students. It was founded in 1951 by Bill Bright at the University of California at Los Angeles. The name was suggested by Wilbur Smith, who served as one of his professors at Fuller Seminary. Initially, Bible study on Wednesday nights was the platform utilized to accomplish the group's purpose. The founder and his wife rented a house near the campus and held meetings for students in their home. An advisory board was established for the organization and it included such names as Billy Graham, Dan Fuller, Dawson Trotman, Henrietta Mears and J. Edwin Orr.

Upon praying and recruiting students, more than 250 UCLA students accepted the invitation to discipleship within a few months. Due to the success at UCLA, other colleges and universities wanted the founder and his wife to establish a similar movement on their campus. By 1952, Campus Crusade had spread to such campuses as the University of Southern California, San Diego State, the University of California at Berkeley and the University of Washington. In 1960, the staff of Campus Crusade numbered 109 and the movement was present on forty campuses in fifteen states. Campus Crusade for Christ grew tremendously during the 1960's and 1970's primarily due to major events employed. In 1967, the organization held a week long evangelistic effort on the University of California Berkeley campus. Also, in 1972, it held an evangelistic gathering in Dallas, Texas that drew 80,000 men and women.

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<sup>75</sup> Ezek. 37:12-14



Campus Crusade for Christ is comprised of various ministries. "Among the many ministries of Campus Crusade for Christ, the campus ministry is the oldest, the largest, the best known, and the most important, because this is where most future staff members for all the ministries are recruited."<sup>76</sup> Students gather in small groups of 25 to 30 people for discipleship training. The small groups are important because they offer the fellowship and identity that attract other students.

A four stage strategy is undertaken to capture the campus. The first stage involves penetration, in which prospective leaders are gathered by staff personnel. Concentration comprises the second stage. The staff and student leaders primarily permeate the freshman class with the Word of God in an effort to generate the necessary students to execute stage three. This stage consists of saturating the entire campus with the gospel. Stage four is continuation, which involves the maintenance of persistent saturation. During stage four, the other three stages "are also in full operation simultaneously, and this is the ultimate goal by which winning, building, and sending men and women take on permanent, nonstop character."<sup>77</sup>

For the most part, Campus Crusade for Christ has been most effective on "large state university campuses and within private colleges and universities with a preponderance of athletes and fraternity and sorority members."<sup>78</sup> It has been least successful on prestigious and intellectual campuses like Yale, Harvard and Stanford. Since Campus Crusade for Christ has been effective in primarily using a witnessing and

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<sup>76</sup> Richard Quebedeaux, *I Found It! The Story of Bill Bright and Campus Crusade* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1979), 125.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 128.

teaching approach for discipleship, the writer believes the implementation of preaching will add another dimension to its movement.

In relation to revivals, the researcher considered the work of Jonathan Edwards. During the Great Awakening of the eighteenth century, Edwards contributed to the longevity of revivalism by providing “historical documentation and theological defense.”<sup>79</sup> He utilized the bible and psychology to address doctrinal errors and ungodly practices. His messages concerning repentance and justification by faith led a significant number of people to seek Jesus Christ for personal guidance. Edwards’ influence was so dynamic for American culture that a movement was coined “our national conversion” in his honor. In addition to Jonathan Edwards, the researcher also considered the contributions of Charles Spurgeon and George Whitefield to the revival tradition.

In conclusion, the researcher has sought to provide theological, historical and biblical perspectives to explain their significance in preaching for discipleship among college students and young adults. He believes the various outlooks shared are extremely instrumental in providing him with sound doctrine and the ability to preach relevant messages to persons within his context of ministry. Thus, the doctrines, paradigm of Jesus’ ministry and other biblical accounts serve as a foundation in helping the researcher transition and transform young adults from membership to discipleship.

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<sup>79</sup> C. C. Goen, *Jonathan Edwards: The Great Awakening* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972).

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The title of this project is “Preaching for Discipleship: Transformation and Transition for College Students and Young Adults – 21<sup>st</sup> Century.” The context chosen for this project proposal was the Bethel Baptist Institutional Church located in Jacksonville, Florida. This inner city house of worship is considered a mega-church and is comprised of an African-American congregation. The participants consisted of ten reliable members within the college and young adult ministry.

The hypothesis of this project claimed that preaching is an effective tool for developing disciples among college students and young adults because it was a tool used by Jesus Christ and his apostles to disciple believers. The proclamation of the Gospel can encourage college students and young adults to pursue God’s will for their life through Jesus Christ. The objective was to implement preaching within the ministry to promote discipleship among the college and young adult generation. The premise was that preaching can be a tool to introduce college students and young adults to discipleship. They were motivated to discover their place in ministry in order to become servants within the body of Christ. Thus, the participation of college students and young adults in ministry had a positive impact within the congregation and community.

The proclamation of the Gospel was implemented during a Revival. Each of the ten participants was provided with a pen and pad for the purpose of taking notes and personal comments.

### **The Planning Process**

The main facilitator for the project was Reverend Corey L. Brown. Reverend Brown is a Doctor of Ministry student at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, OH. Reverend Brown serves as the Pastor of College and Young Adults at Bethel Baptist Institutional Church in Jacksonville, Florida where Dr. Rudolph W. McKissick, Sr. and Dr. Rudolph W. McKissick, Jr. serve as Senior Pastor.

Initially, the researcher secured several resources involving the format and administration of questionnaires in order to design the project effectively. Upon reviewing *You and Your Action Research Project*, he discovered some information that was very helpful during the initial stage. The authors provided several guidelines for constructing and administering a questionnaire. Some of those guidelines include:

- Deciding what information you need to find out. Construct your questionnaire or use one that has already been piloted. Put the instructions for completing the questionnaire at the top of the paper.
- Clearly write or type your questionnaire. Pay attention to detail in content and appearance.

- Pilot the questionnaire. Try it out on a few people and invite their critique. Analyze the responses to see if it is giving you the kind of data you want.<sup>1</sup>

The researcher discovered that these guidelines were beneficial in developing the questionnaire for the project. The project proceeded as follows:

First, the researcher held a meeting designed to inform the three context associates of the researcher's decision to implement a Revival in October 2005.

Second, a meeting was held with the ten participants. The researcher explained the objectives of the project and informed the participants of the scheduled date for implementation. Their presence and participation was encouraged at the Revival.

Third, preaching was implemented during a Revival for the ministry. The researcher conducted the preaching at the worship service.

Fourth, questionnaires were distributed to the ten participants to fill out after the Revival. The questions focused on the effectiveness of preaching in relation to discipleship. Some questions pertained to the impact that preaching has upon one's relationship with God and Jesus Christ. A sample of the questionnaire can be viewed in Appendix A. Additional information regarding the questionnaire is elaborated on in Chapter Five, Field Experience.

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<sup>1</sup> Jean McNiff, Pamela Lomax and Jack Whitehead, *You and Your Action Research Project 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2003), 123.

## Research Design, Measurement and Instrumentation

Upon reviewing *Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change* the researcher discovered that, "Action Research is a form of research that generates knowledge claims for the express purpose of taking action to promote social change and social analysis."<sup>2</sup> It consists of research, action and participation from trained social researchers and individuals within communities or organizations.

The information gathered from reading, *Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change* indicated that the qualitative or quantitative research methods could be used for this project. However, after reading the description of the methodologies, the researcher decided to employ qualitative methodology.

The researcher created a questionnaire that included ten questions. Essentially, the questions related to the objectives of the project which are preaching for discipleship, transition and transformation. Thus, it focused on preaching being utilized to transform and transition college students and young adults toward discipleship. Upon completion of the questionnaires, the researcher discovered that the participants had an earnest desire to fulfill the calling that God has for their life. The participants sought to join ministries where their gift could be utilized and they sought to explore other endeavors that God had placed upon their heart.

The participants assessed the sermons as inspirational and life changing. Participant 1 stated, "The message was very encouraging." Participant 2 declared, "I

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<sup>2</sup> Davydd J. Greenwood and Morten Levin, *Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 1998), 6.

needed to hear that.” Participant 3 said, “I know what I need to do now.” Participant 4 stated, “That message was confirmation for me.”

The preaching during the Revival was dynamic and inspirational. As a result, the participants were excited about participating in greater ministry for the Lord. The enthusiasm was evidenced in their body language, speech and willingness to assist the College and Young Adult ministry.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **FIELD EXPERIENCE**

In this section, the researcher will provide a review of what occurred during the implementation of his project. Also, the researcher will elaborate on the data collection methods used and the data analysis objectives.

The researcher promoted the Revival during Sunday morning worship services and Wednesday night Bible study at Bethel Baptist Institutional Church. He also publicized it within his ministry and on various college campuses throughout Jacksonville, FL. The researcher's ministry is comprised of individuals between the ages of 21 years old and 35 years old. He encouraged ten reliable members within his ministry to meet with him regarding the Revival. He asked them to participate in the project by filling out questionnaires related to the proclamation of the gospel.

After planning and designing the model of a Revival service, the researcher proceeded to preach "I'm Slinging My Rock" before the College and Young Adult Ministry at Bethel Baptist Institutional Church in Jacksonville, Florida. (Appendix C). The researcher has also included additional sermons in this project that may be used to encourage discipleship among young adults. Initially, the researcher asked the congregation to find the biblical scripture, I Samuel 17 in their Bible. This scripture was



chosen because it involves David, a young adult, pursuing God's calling upon his life.<sup>1</sup> The researcher went on to read additional verses set forth in I Samuel 17:38-54.<sup>2</sup> After reading the scripture, he encouraged the congregation to be seated. He then provided the congregation with the title of his sermon. The researcher used the dialectical method for preaching the sermon.

Subsequently the researcher shared three significant principles with the congregation. The first principle informed the congregation that they should pursue what God has for them because what they think is needed is not really necessary. The second principle admonished persons to pursue God's will by talking to their issue about their God instead of talking to God about their issue. The third principle challenged the congregation to pursue their purpose because other people's blessing was connected to their boldness. The sermon and its message were well received by the congregation. A copy of the message can be viewed in Appendix C. The benediction was given and the ministry's members distributed additional information to the congregation regarding the College and Young Adult Ministry.

In relation to data collection methods, the researcher utilized questionnaires for this project. The questionnaires were distributed and received by the Context Associates. Also, the ushers that served during the Revival took attendance. The attendance was taken during the reading of the scripture to ensure an adequate count. Each usher calculated the number of persons in their section and reported the amount to the researcher. Based upon their calculation, there were 403 persons in attendance.

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<sup>1</sup>1 Sam. 17

<sup>2</sup>1 Sam.17:38-54

Upon implementing the Revival, the researcher discovered that preaching is an effective tool for encouraging discipleship among college students and young adults.

This served as confirmation for the writer's hypothesis. After reviewing the ten

questionnaires, the researcher learned that 70% of the participants strongly agreed that

preaching is an effective tool for the development of their faith. Upon conversing with

members within the ministry, the researcher discovered that preaching is heavily

depended upon for hearing from God. The researcher also discovered that 70% of the

participants strongly agreed that preaching is significant in helping them to develop their

relationship with God. In addition, 60% strongly agreed while 30% agreed that

preaching is an effective tool for their personal growth. These results were very

important because it confirmed that preaching can be utilized to transition college

students and young adults. In regard to preaching helping to identify their calling 50%

strongly agreed while 30% agreed. This is significant since a person's calling is

connected to discipleship. The researcher was also made aware that 60% of those

surveyed strongly agreed that preaching has been instrumental in their understanding of

God. Furthermore, the researcher discovered that 50% of the participants agreed (either

strongly agreed or simply agreed) that preaching influenced them to join a ministry

within the church. This response also served as confirmation that preaching is an

effective tool for promoting discipleship among college students and young adults.

Further confirmation was provided when 30% of the participants strongly agreed whereas

70% agreed that preaching is an effective tool for the College and Young Adult Ministry.

In addition, the researcher's hypothesis was substantiated when 40% of those questioned

strongly agreed and 50% agreed that preaching has helped them to understand that they are called to discipleship. The results of the questionnaire can be viewed in Appendix B.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **REFLECTION, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the researcher's objective is to reflect on the field experience. Also, a model for the project as implemented during the field experience will be provided. In addition, the researcher will offer his own theological reflection based upon the project. Finally, recommendations for future research will be shared.

To begin, the implementation of preaching within the College and Young Adult Ministry at Bethel Baptist Institutional Church in Jacksonville, Florida was a tremendous success. Both, the Context Associates and members within the College and Young Adult Ministry contributed to the project's outcome. As a result of the field experience, the researcher discovered that preaching is an effective tool for encouraging discipleship among college students and young adults based on the response from the congregation. Proclaiming the gospel can be utilized to transform and transition the hip-hop generation from membership to discipleship. Upon reviewing the results of the questionnaires, a significant amount of college students and young adults acknowledged that preaching helped them to understand that they were called to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. They also conceded that preaching helped them to identify their calling and influenced them to join a ministry.

As a result of utilizing preaching, the researcher noticed a major difference in attendance. Usually, he would witness a maximum of 75 persons on a monthly basis.

During this time, teaching was used for the study of God's Word. However, when preaching was implemented, 403 people were in attendance. Upon talking with some participants, the researcher discovered that preaching is more preferred than teaching. Thus, the researcher recognized that preaching could be used within the College and Young Adult Ministry to impact a larger crowd. Indeed, this would benefit the church and its community. The project helped the researcher to recognize and appreciate the gift of preaching. The researcher realized the need for preaching toward the hip-hop generation. Upon reflection, the researcher will seek to implement more preaching within the College and Young Adult Ministry.

In relation to a model, a Revival format was used to complement the preaching. The praise and worship leader for the College and Young Adult Ministry started the worship service. Sister Valerie Hill, Bethel's Minister of Praise and Worship accompanied Sister Joya Webster. Together, they set the atmosphere for the Revival. After praise and worship, the writer led the congregation in prayer. Next, the writer directed the congregation to a certain text within the Bible for the reading of the scripture. Subsequently, the title of the sermon was given and the proclamation of God's Word followed. An invitation to discipleship was extended after the sermon. Pastor Rudolph W. McKissick, Sr. then presided over the offering and gave his remarks. Afterward, the researcher made remarks and the benediction was given. As the congregation departed, members from the College and Young Adult Ministry distributed information about the ministry. Later, the Context Associates distributed and received the questionnaires from the ten participants.

After conducting the field experience, the researcher concluded that preaching is a powerful gift from God based on the feedback from the congregation. The proclamation of the Gospel can be used to promote discipleship within the Kingdom. The researcher discovered that preaching could have a major impact upon college students and young adults. It is a tool that can transition and transform a generation into doing God's will. This is very important for the church and academic community because the paradigm of preaching in a Revival setting can be instrumental in the growth and development of college students and young adults. When considering the results of the project, the researcher realized that preaching should be used more often within the College and Young Ministry. The power of the preached Word can influence the hip-hop generation to serve the Lord. In addition, preaching encourages college students and young adults to enhance their relationship with God. The researcher was truly grateful for this project because it helped in the growth and development of the College and Young Adult Ministry at Bethel. Moreover, the writer's doubts about preaching making a difference within the ministry were removed.

In regard to future research, the researcher recommends that preaching be utilized not only during a Revival but in a Conference setting as well. The Conference should commence with preaching and workshops should follow. For example, you may begin with a worship service on Friday night and offer workshops on Saturday morning. A specific theme should be addressed as a result of preaching and teaching sermons. Moreover, praise and worship should cater to the college and young adult crowd. Thus, music from such gospel artists as Israel and New Breed,

Byron Cage and Kurt Carr should also be considered. The researcher suggests that a diverse group of preachers participate in the conference and/or annual Revival for proclamation throughout the year. This diversity will add another dimension and create expectation within the ministry. Also, the researcher recommends that the different seasons of the Christian calendar be considered in order to enhance the preaching/sermons and generate excitement. In addition, the researcher encourages ministers to capitalize on holidays such as Valentine's Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Other holidays should be considered for dealing with certain topics through preaching. Furthermore, the researcher recommends that pastors stay abreast of the various contemporary entertainers, music and issues within the hip-hop community in order to be creative and relevant to persons in your ministry. Finally, the researcher suggests that churches advertise the Revival or Conference via the media, local churches, church conferences, and college campuses in the community. This action will give churches the opportunity to impact more people in their respective communities.

**APPENDIX A**

**POST-TEST: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR  
COLLEGE AND YOUNG ADULT MEMBERS**



## APPENDIX A

POST-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE FOR  
COLLEGE AND YOUNG ADULT MEMBERS

Please answer the following questions using the scale below to record your answers.

Circle the number that best corresponds to your opinion for each question separately.

1 = Strongly Agree   2 = Agree   3 = Neutral   4 = Disagree   5 = Strongly Disagree

1. Preaching is an effective tool for the development of your faith.
2. Preaching is significant in helping you develop your relationship with God.
3. Preaching is an effective tool for your personal growth.
4. Preaching is vital in helping you identify your *calling*.
5. Preaching has been instrumental in your understanding of who God is.
6. Preaching has influenced you to join a ministry within the church.
7. Preaching is an effective tool for the College and Young Adult Ministry.
8. Preaching has been instrumental in your understanding of who Jesus Christ is.
9. Preaching has helped you to understand that you are called to be a “disciple” through Jesus Christ.
10. Preaching has been instrumental in helping you develop a relationship with Jesus Christ.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **POST-TEST RESULTS: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS AND YOUNG ADULT MEMBERS**

**POST TEST RESULTS: QUESTIONNAIRE**  
**FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS AND YOUNG ADULT MEMBERS**

<b>Question No.</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
<u>1.</u>	70%	20%	10%		
<u>2.</u>	70%	20%		10%	
<u>3.</u>	60%	30%	10%		
<u>4.</u>	50%	30%	10%	10%	
<u>5.</u>	60%	30%	10%		
<u>6.</u>	10%	40%	50%		
<u>7.</u>	30%	70%			
<u>8.</u>	60%	40%			
<u>9.</u>	40%	50%	10%		
<u>10.</u>	40%	50%	10%		

**Question No.:**

1. Preaching is an effective tool for the development of your faith.
2. Preaching is significant in helping you develop your relationship with God.
3. Preaching is an effective tool for your personal growth.
4. Preaching is vital in helping you identify your *calling*.
5. Preaching has been instrumental in your understanding of who God is.
6. Preaching has influenced you to join a ministry within the church.
7. Preaching is an effective tool for the College and Young Adult Ministry.
8. Preaching has been instrumental in your understanding of who Jesus Christ is.
9. Preaching has helped you to understand that you are called to be a "disciple" through Jesus Christ.
10. Preaching has been instrumental in helping you develop a relationship with Jesus Christ.

**APPENDIX C**

**SERMON PREACHED DURING REVIVAL WEEK AND ADDITIONAL  
SERMONS**

**I'm Slinging My Rock**  
**1 Samuel 17: 38-54**

I've come to understand that it's exciting when God tells you about your destiny because a destiny let's you know where you're headed. It's a joy when God informs you about your destiny because it seeks to let you know what's in store for your life. It makes you aware of what's up the road. It provides you with notice about your future. It gives you a preview of your tomorrow to let you know that you won't always be where you are right now.

Let me just take a pause right there because some people can't seem to figure out your praise. Some people can't understand the way you worship. Some people can't figure out why you're lifting holy hands because they know what you are going through in your life. But you're not praising Him because of where you are. You're giving Him praise because of where you're headed. You're not blessing Him because of where you are. You're blessing His name because of what's up the road. He's given you a peak into your future so you're giving Him praise for what's on the way.

You don't have a dime, but you're giving Him praise. You don't have a job, but you're giving Him glory. You're struggling just to make it, but you're blessing His name because you already know what's on the way.

In the text, David is on the brink of walking into his destiny. God had already told him about his future. He had already informed him about his tomorrow. He told him how He wanted him to lead His people because Saul was getting fired from his job. I think that's so interesting because in Chapter 16 he finds out about destiny, but in Chapter 17 he encounters some drama. In Chapter 16 he's given a promise, but one chapter later he faces a problem. Because you don't get to destiny without having some

drama because the devil doesn't want you to receive what God said. You can't get the blessing without having some burdens because the enemy doesn't want you to walk into your season.

That should have made somebody shout because you've been complaining about the hell that you've been catching. You've been talking about the obstacles that you've been facing. But the only reason you're facing what you're facing is because the devil understands that you're headed for destiny.

And the closer you get – the more hell you catch. The closer you get – the more he attacks. The closer you get – the greater the struggle because you've got to fight to receive what God said.

I just came to bless somebody because when David showed up for battle his brothers started tripping. When he showed up for the battle he was given a hard time. See, you know you're on the verge of receiving your promise when you receive opposition from within your camp.

Because some folk that are close to you don't mean you no good. Some folk that are close don't wanna see you blessed. David's brother wanted him to stay where he was, but David told his brother "I'm slinging my rock." He said, "I've been a shepherd in the field, but I was promised the palace so I've decided not to leave until I sling my rock."

### **Relevant Question**

What things do I need to know about realizing my destiny?

**I. You have to understand that everything you think you need really ain't necessary**

**- verse 40**

I've discovered that a lot of people are missing out on their blessing because they're waiting until they obtain certain things. A lot of people are passing up what God has for them because they're waiting for certain things to fall into place. They believe it's imperative for them to have a certain amount of money. They believe it's vital for them to have a certain degree. They think it's necessary for them to address some other situations before they can receive what God said.

There are some people in this service that are delaying their blessing. Some people in this sanctuary are missing out on their season. Some people in the building are missing out on their breakthrough because they think they need certain things to possess what God promised.

I'm messing with somebody because God told you what to do, but you're still waiting. He put a Word in your spirit, but you haven't moved. He gave you a vision, but you're still holding out because you think some things are necessary to get the job done.

That's what David discovers in our text. David is about to go to battle against a giant named Goliath. But before he goes out he has a meeting with Saul. At first, Saul thought David was too young to fight Goliath, but David assured him that he could hold his own. He pointed out that Goliath had been fighting for years, but David also had some experience on his side. Saul dressed him in his regalia, but he was uncomfortable

because he wasn't accustomed to fighting like Saul. He took off the armor and gave it to Saul because you've got to get rid of dead weight that's keeping you down.

And I don't know who I'm talking to, but God said "you've got some people in your life that you need to let go. You've got some people hanging around you that you need to cut loose. There are some people in your life that you need to release because their keeping you from receiving what God has for your life!

They don't have any vision and they don't have any goals and you need to cut them loose because they're holding you down.

Let's get back to the text. In verse 40, we're told what David took with him to the heat of battle. The text says, "He took his staff and his sling and five smooth stones." That caught my attention because when you read the story David never used his staff because you don't always need what you think is necessary. He took his staff with him, but he didn't even use it because what you think is important isn't always needed.

I just believe David took his staff with him because he used it in the past to defeat his enemy. He used it in the past on the lion and the bear, but God showed him that he didn't need it this time around.

Somebody knows what I'm talking about because you didn't have the experience, but you got the job. You don't receive any child support, but you support your child. You didn't have a man, but you still got the house because God has a way of working things out.

That should have made somebody shout because you're working on a job that you don't deserve. You're living in a house that shouldn't be yours. You got some blessings right now that you can't explain because God showed you favor at the right time!



## **II. Instead of talking to God about your issue, talk to your issue about your God – v.**

### **45**

Sometimes we have a tendency to magnify our problems because we talk more about what we're going through instead of our God. We have an inclination to give power to our issue because we give more press to what we're dealing with instead of our Lord. David teaches us a powerful lesson because he doesn't talk to God about his enemy, but he talks to his enemy about his God. He doesn't talk to his Lord about his problem, but he talks to his problem about his Lord.

That's what we discover in verse 45. After Goliath talked some jive in an effort to scare David, David continued to hold his ground and gave his response. Goliath talked about what he was going to do to David, but David squared his shoulders and didn't back down.

He said, "You come against me with your sword, spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty." He didn't go to God talking about his opposition, but he spoke to his opposition about his God. Because when you talk about your issue you put yourself on the defense, but when you talk about your God you put yourself in control.

Somebody needs to hear that because you've been talking about your issue all day long. You talk about your problem every day of the week. You talk about what you're going through every time you get a chance and it's time to talk to your issue about your God.

I don't know who I'm talking to, but you need to stop talking to God about your sickness and start talking to your sickness about your Healer. Stop talking to God about

your bills, but talk to your bills about your Provider. Stop talking to God about your problem, but talk to your problem about your God because if God be for you who can stand against you.

If you're laid off from the job you've got to tell the enemy "my God shall supply everything I need." If you're sick in your body you've got to let the devil know "by His stripes I am healed." If you're facing opposition you've got to tell the enemy "no weapon formed against me shall be able to prosper" because when you talk to your issue about your God you let the enemy know who's really in charge!

The only reason David could talk about his God is because he already had evidence of what the Lord could do. The only reason he could talk trash to his enemy is because he already had some proof from his past. I like that because this ain't the first time you've been in a jam. You already know He can make a way out of no way. You know He can open doors that no man can close. You know He can keep you in spite of what you're going through because you've already got evidence of what He can do!

David refers to God as the Lord Almighty. That phrase means the Lord who goes before you or who goes forth in warfare. I like that because David is letting Goliath know that before they meet up he's already got the victory because God has gone before him to take care of his business. He's letting his enemy know that things have worked out for his good because the Lord had already showed up to fight his battle.

That made me *wanna holler* because you don't always have to be present in order to get the victory because sometimes He fights the battle before you ever show up.

God said “While you’re up in worship He’s gone before you to the doctor. While you’re on the job, He’s working down at the bank. While you’re at home sleep, He’s working on your boss so that when you show up you can give Him some praise.”

Somebody knows what I’m talking about because when you showed up to the doctor things had checked out just fine. When you got to the bank you had been approved. When you got to the job, the promotion was yours because God answered your prayer before you ever showed up!

That’s why you can praise Him on your way to the doctor. That’s why you can praise Him on your way to the bank. That’s why you can bless Him before you go back to work because He’ll handle your business before you ever show up!

I don’t know who this is for, but God said “He’s already worked out what you’re trying to figure out because He’s already gone before you to take care of business. You just need to step out and take Him at His Word because He’s already done things in the spiritual for you to experience them in the natural.”

I like that because David was talking as if he knew what was gonna happen. He was talking like he knew he already had the victory. Because even though he didn’t have as many weapons as Goliath he saw in the spirit that it was already done.

That’s why some of your friends think that you’re crazy. That’s why folk in your family think you’re insane. Because they’re looking in the natural, but you’re looking in the spiritual and you know for yourself that it’s already done.

### **III. Other peoples' blessing is tied to your boldness – v. 52**

Often times, we like to talk about how the devil is blocking our blessing, but we hardly ever talk about how we're blocking other peoples' blessing. We like to talk about how our enemies are keeping us down, but we never mention how we're the reason why some folk are bound.

I would like to suggest that some people aren't blessed the way God would have them to be because some of us haven't move out on what God said. Some people aren't in the place that God has ordained because some of us have refused to do what God told us. I hope you understand that when God asks you to do something other people's blessing is dependent on you. Whenever God places something in your spirit other peoples' blessing is tied to your move. If you're not obedient they don't get blessed. If you are not faithful they miss out on their season. If you don't move out they miss out on their breakthrough because when God calls you to do something it's not just about you. All you've got to do is take a look in the Bible. If Noah didn't build the ark his family would have drowned. If Moses wouldn't have gone to Egypt, his people would have stayed in bondage. If Joshua weren't obedient, they wouldn't have made it into the promise because other people's blessing is tied to your move.

That's what we discover in our text. David decided to move out against Goliath and he eventually wiped him out. He decided to move on what God said and he struck Goliath down with a sling and a rock.

To understand where I'm going you've got to go back to verse 24. It says, "When the Israelites saw Goliath they ran in great fear, but we discover in verse 52 that they ran after the Philistines. In verse 24 they were bound by fear, but after David killed Goliath.

they got set free. Because when you get bold folk around you will get blessed because you had the nerve to do what God said.”

I don’t know who I’m talking to, but you’ve got some folk in your family that need to be loosed. You’ve got some folk on your job that need to be free. You’ve got some folk hanging around you that are still locked up and you’ve got to be bold so they can be blessed.

I like this text because all it took was one person to set everybody free. All it took was one person to turn things around. After David killed Goliath folk around him got loose because you’ve got to look out for other people when you get blessed.

That’s why when you walk into your season you need to take somebody with you. When you receive what God promised you need to help out your neighbor. When you receive what He told you don’t be selfish because He wants you to be a blessing to somebody else!

I’ll let ya’ll go, but David used a rock and he got the victory. He only used a rock and he got blessed. He put a rock in his sling wiped out his enemy because sometimes all you need is a rock in your hand.

When you can’t see your way – you’ve got to use your rock. When you don’t know how you’re gonna make it – you’ve got to use your rock. When your back is against the wall – you’ve got to call on your rock and you’ll find out for yourself that He’ll rock your world.

If you need a way to be made – just call on the rock. If you need healing in your body – call on the rock. If you need a door to be opened – call on the rock and He’ll be right there to answer your prayer.

Let's get out of here, but David used a rock to defeat Goliath, but God also used a rock to defeat the devil. They put nails in His hands and they pierced Him in the side. He hung his head and then He died. He died all night Friday and all day Saturday, but early Sunday morning He got up with all power.

**Too Blessed to be Hidden**  
**1 Samuel 10:20-24**

I would dare to say that a lot of people are not where they're supposed to be. A lot of people have yet to step up to the plate to do what God has called for them to do. I've come to discover that a lot of people are content with where they are. They're satisfied with where they are because they're living in their comfort zone. They've found a certain area in which to dwell and the thought of moving hasn't crossed their mind.

This is very dangerous because if you decide to stay where you are you won't receive all that God has for your life. If you become satisfied with where you are, you'll end up having to settle for less. There are some folk here today that aren't blessed the way they should be blessed because they're content with where they are. There are some people here today that are settling for less because they have confined themselves to a certain position in life.

You may not want to admit it, but you have settled for less because you've allowed fear and doubt to control your mind. You're not where you're supposed to be because you've gotten comfortable with where you are.

You have become complacent because you don't want to deal with the challenge of moving ahead. You don't want to deal with struggle and you don't want to deal with pain. And the enemy is having a field day with you because he's got you just where he wants you. He's confined you to a certain spot and you need to recognize that as long as you are content with where you are you'll be prevented from being discovered because the primary job of the enemy is to keep you hidden.

He doesn't want you to get discovered so he convinces you to stay where you are. He doesn't want anybody to notice you so he persuades you to stay in the dark. Nobody knows who you are because the enemy has kept you from being seen. You don't even know who you are because you've gotten comfortable where you are.

You're just like Saul because you're hanging out in a place where you don't belong and you need to understand that you're too blessed to be hidden.

Saul is hanging out in mediocrity because he's afraid to do what God has called him to do. He's been called to become the King of Israel, but he's allowed doubt and fear to control his mind. And since doubt and fear is controlling his mind he remains to be seen. Everybody is looking for him, but he continues to go undiscovered. They put an APB out for him, but he is nowhere in sight because the enemy has convinced him to stay where he is.

Somebody here is dealing with that today and God wanted me to let you know that it's about time for you to stop hiding. You've been content with where you are for far too long and it's about time to stand front and center.

This isn't for everybody because some people already know they're too blessed to be hidden. That's why you've had to cut some folk loose because you refuse to stay where you are. That's why some folk in your family got issues with you because you refuse to be hidden.

I don't know about you but I've come to understand that sometimes you've got to tell people that you can't hang out with them any longer because the enemy will use them to keep you in the dark.



But how many people understand that you're too blessed to be hidden. You don't have plans to stay where you are because you refuse to settle for less. You're not going to get caught up with where you are because you refuse to go undiscovered. Folk can talk about you all they want but you're making plans to move ahead because you understand you're too blessed to be hidden!

### **Relevant Question**

**Why should I come out from where I am hiding?**

**I. Because God has given you a peek at what He wants you to possess**

To understand where I'm coming from you've got to go back to chapter nine. In chapter nine, we discover that Saul has been sent to search for his father's donkeys. His father's donkeys had strayed away and Saul was given the assignment to go and look for them. When you take a look at the route that he took in search of his father's donkeys something intriguing jumps out at you. When you consider the areas that he covered during his search you discover that these are the same areas that he will eventually possess. He hasn't been confirmed as King of Israel yet, but God has given him a peek at what He wants him to possess.

That's why I can't be hidden because God has given me a peek at what he wants me to possess. That's why I refuse to stay where I am because I've been given a glimpse of what He has for my life. I can't afford to get comfortable where I am because He's given me a vision of what's coming ahead.

And somebody knows what I'm talking about because God has given you a peek at what He wants you to possess. You've been given a glimpse of what He has for your

life. And you know that you can't stay where you are because you refuse to miss out on your blessing.

He's let you see the house and He's let you drive the car and you know you can't afford to get comfortable where you are. He's given you a glimpse of the business and He's let you see the ministry and you know for yourself that you can't stay where you are.

Sometimes God will give you a peek at what He has for you so you won't get comfortable in your current position. Sometimes He has to give you a peek into your future so you won't get content with staying where you are.

Some folk think you should be happy with where you are, but they didn't see the vision that God gave to you. Some folk think that you're in a good situation, but they didn't get a peek of what God has for your life. Because if they would have gotten a peek into your future they would understand why you can't stay where you are.

It's not that you don't appreciate where you are. You just understand that better days are ahead. It's not that you don't like where you are. It's just that you've been given a sneak preview of what's in store for your life.

And the thing that I've discovered about sneak previews is that there's only a select group of people that get invited to the showing. When you are invited to observe a sneak preview, you get a chance to see the movie before it is open to the public. You get to see everything happen before the public sees it happen because you got a chance to see the sneak preview.

God wanted me to tell you that the reason some folk can't understand why you shout the way you do is because they weren't invited to your sneak preview. Your sneak

preview was between you and God and that's why you can praise Him the way that you do. The sneak preview was for your eyes only, but there is coming a time when He'll open it up to the public.

You should tell somebody "When I move into the house, you've got to stop by and see it. When I get the new car, you've got to stop by to see it. When I get the degree, you've got to come by and see it because I already know what's in store for my life"!

I've been given a peek at what He wants me to have and that's why I can't afford to stay where I am. I've seen too much for me to just sit back and chill. That's why I've got to make sure that I bring the vision to pass.

Now if you want to stay where you are then that's your problem, but I understand that the best is yet to come. You can stay where you are if you want to but I'll have to check you later because I want to get everything that God has for my life.

I'm expecting God to do just what He said and I can't afford to stay where I am! I don't know when it's going to happen, but I know it's going to happen because He's already showed me what He has for my life!

## **II. Because you've been "chosen" in spite of your credentials -- verse 21**

When you consider the context of our text you discover that Saul didn't think that he was qualified for what God was calling him to do. When Samuel informed him that he would become king Saul responded as if he had the wrong person. He said, "Am I not a Benjamite, from the smallest tribe of Israel and is not my clan the least of all the clans

of the tribe of Benjamin.” He didn’t think that he had the right credentials and he thought that Samuel should have been looking somewhere else.

But verse 21 helps us to understand how he got the assignment because it lets us know that he was “chosen.” He wasn’t chosen by the people. He was chosen by God because sometimes God chooses the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. It may not make a lot of sense to the world, but it makes a whole lot of sense to God because His sole purpose in choosing is for Him to get the glory.

God said, “I chose Saul because he was considered unqualified and I was seeking to bring some glory to my name.”

And somebody’s just like Saul because God chose you when you were considered qualified. He chose you in spite of your credentials because He wanted to bring some glory to His name.

You weren’t qualified for the job, but you ended up with the job. You weren’t qualified for the loan, but you ended up with the loan. You weren’t qualified for the house, but you ended up in the house and you couldn’t help but give glory to His name.

Other people were more qualified, but God chose you. Other people were more competent, but God chose you. Other people deserved it, but God chose you and now you’re laughing all the way to the bank.

You don’t deserve to have the job, but God chose you. You’re not supposed to be in the house, but God chose you. You’re not supposed to have your own business, but He chose you because He wanted to bring some glory to His name.

Sometimes God will bless you in spite of your credentials just so He can bring some glory to His name.

I might as well be prophetic because God wanted me to tell somebody that even though you're not qualified do what you've got to do and He'll work everything out. Apply for the loan even though you're not qualified. Put your name in for the job even though you don't fit the bill because you might get chosen in spite of your credentials.

I like what the text has to offer because we discover that God will make you the center of attention. He will make you the center of attraction. The text says that all the tribes were brought forth and the tribe of Benjamin was chosen. Then the tribe of Benjamin was brought forth and Matri's clan was chosen. Finally, when Matri's clan was brought forth Saul was chosen and he ended up being the center of attention.

Every other tribe that was there knew he wasn't qualified, but he ended up being the center of attention. Sometimes God will make you the center of attention by blessing you in the presence of your enemies.

God wanted me to tell you that He hasn't forgot about your blessing, because He just wants to bless you in the presence of your enemies. He's waiting on the people that said you weren't going to make it. He's waiting on the people that counted you out.

The job is on the way. He's just waiting on your enemies. The money is on the way. He's just waiting on your haters. The degree is on the way. He's just waiting on your enemies because He's seeking to bring glory to His name!

God had Saul stand before the people because He wanted to bless him right in front of their face. They knew he was qualified for the assignment, but since God chose him they couldn't do anything about it.

That's why you shouldn't be concerned about your haters on the job because God will bless you right in front of their face. They may lie and scheme to keep you where you are, but if God has chosen you they can't do anything about it.

You may not be qualified, but they can't do anything about it. You may not have the credentials, but it's out of their hands. You may not deserve it, but it really doesn't matter because you've been chosen by the Most High God!

### **III. God has invested too much in you**

In verse 21 the people are looking for Saul because they understand that he's been chosen as their King, but they come to discover that he's nowhere to be found. He has decided to hide himself among the baggage, but God comes to inform him that he's too blessed to be hidden.

Saul has been called to become the king of Israel, but we come to understand that he's wasting his anointing. God had anointed Saul for his assignment as king, but Saul has decided to hide what he's been given.

God told him "I've invested too much in you for you to stay where you are and I can't afford for you to keep hiding my anointing." He was hiding among the baggage, but God had to expose him because God understood that he was too blessed to be hidden.

And that's what God wanted me to share with somebody today because there are some folk here today that are wasting God's anointing because you have decided to hide among the baggage. God said He's put too much in you for you to stay where you are and you need to use the anointing for the assignment you've been given.

You were anointed to sing, but you've been hiding your anointing. You've been anointed to evangelize, but you're nowhere to be found. You've been anointed to preach the gospel, but you've been chilling in the cut and you need to understand that you're too blessed to be hidden.

God has invested too much in you for you to stay where you are and He can't afford for you to keep hiding His anointing. God said, "if you don't make up in your mind to come out from where you are He'll come and expose you and force you out of hiding."

The reason God blessed you with what He placed in you is so that you can go out and be a blessing to someone else. That's what He's trying to get Saul to understand because He's been anointed to bless God's people.

God said, "I know what I've placed in you and that's why I've got to expose you because I know for myself that you're too blessed to be hidden." He's the one that knew you before you were in your mother's womb and He's about to reveal the anointing that He has on your life.

You're about to get exposed on the job because you're too blessed to be hidden. He's about to expose you in the church, because you're too blessed to be hidden. He's about to expose you to the city because He's placed too much in you and He can't afford for you to stay where you are.

You've got to go to another level because you're too gifted. You're about to get your breakthrough because you're too blessed to stay where you are. You're about to get some increase because you're too blessed to be hidden as it's about time for you to be exposed.

I don't know who this is for but God wanted me to tell you that He's about to introduce you to some people that you never thought you would meet and He's about to take you places that you never thought you would go because He's invested too much in you and you're too blessed to be hidden.

God said, "I'm about to take you on the ride of your life because I can't afford for you to stay where you are." So instead of hanging out with the baggage you need to start packing your bags because God is getting ready to bless your life.

I don't know when it's going to happen, but I know it's in the works. I don't know the exact date, but I'm getting ready because I understand that I'm too blessed to be hidden.

You can't stay where you are. You're too blessed to be hidden. You're not going to be there much longer. You're too gifted to be hidden. There's something greater in store for you because you're too blessed to be hidden and that's why you can't afford to stay where you are.

I guess that's why Jesus couldn't stay in the grave because He understood that He was too blessed to be hidden. They crucified Him on Friday and they buried Him on Saturday. But when they looked for Him on Sunday He was nowhere to be found. The angel pulled back the stone, but He wasn't there because God understood that He was too blessed to be hidden.



**Going Out on a Limb**  
**Luke 19:1-9**

There comes a time when you've got to be willing to leave your comfort zone. There comes a time when you've got to be willing to go outside of the box. For the most part, we have a problem with going against the protocol because we're not certain how things will turn out if we go against the grain. It's difficult for us to do something that goes against the norm because we're not sure about the results that we'll see on the other side.

We stick to the norm because we know what to expect. We stay in the box because it makes us feel safe. We stick to tradition because it gives us peace, but sometimes you've got to be willing to go out on a limb.

Sometimes you've got to be willing to leave what's familiar. Sometimes you've got to do something that will make you look crazy. You've got to take a risk that you don't feel like taking to receive something awesome in your life.

You can't go to the next level by staying in the box. You can't enlarge your territory by sticking with the protocol. You can't witness increase by doing what's normal, but you've got to be willing to go out on a limb.

You've got to take a chance if you want something better. You've got to take a gamble if you want something greater. If you want something more special than what you've already got you've got to be willing to put your neck on the line!

That's what we discover in our text. Jesus is passing through the city of Jericho when we're introduced to a tax collector by the name of Zacchaeus. It's obvious that Zacchaeus has heard about Jesus because he wanted to see who He was. The text let's us

know that Zacchaeus was short and he couldn't see Jesus because of the crowd. So he decided to run ahead and he climbed a tree because sometimes you can't see Him until you decide to go higher.

Sometimes you can't see Him hanging out with the crowd. Sometimes you can't see Him when you're around certain people. Sometimes you can't see Him when you're around a certain group. So every now and then you've got to go higher.

And I may have witness because you had some folk in the crowd that was blocking your vision. You had some folk in your circle that was hindering your sight. You couldn't see Him for yourself with certain folk around you so you made a decision that it was time to go higher!

I don't know about you, but I've had to leave some folk alone in order to see Jesus. I've had to cut some folk loose for me to see the Lord. I've had to let some folk go in order to see the Savior because some folk in the crowd will mess with your vision! They'll give you every reason of why it can't be done. They'll give you an explanation of why it will never happen. They'll bring up every negative of why it's impossible. That's why you've got to be willing to get away from the crowd!

I like that because the text suggests that Jesus doesn't pay attention to folk in the crowd, but He puts His focus on the people that go out on a limb. He didn't stop for the people within the crowd. He stopped for Zacchaeus who went out on a limb!

Zacchaeus is the only one that's up in the tree. Zacchaeus is the only one that's gone out on a limb. He's the only one that put his neck on the line and He's the only one that ended up getting blessed by the Lord!

See, when you decide to go higher folk will look at you crazy. When you go against the grain they'll think you're insane. When you step out on faith folk will look at you funny, but the Lord will stop by and bless your life!

Somebody knows what I'm talking about because folk thought you were crazy, but you got the blessing. They thought you had lost it, but you got the increase. They looked at you funny, but you received what He promised because you made a decision to go out on a limb!

As a matter of fact, if you end up falling He'll be there to catch you. If you end up stumbling He'll reach out and grab you. If you lose your balance He'll come to your rescue and that's why you should be willing to go out on a limb!

### **Relevant Question**

**What things do I need to know about going out on a limb?**

#### **I. You've got to allow your issue to serve as inspiration – v. 3 & 4**

In the text, we're informed that Zacchaeus has a desire to see Jesus for himself, but he's unable to do it because of his size. Jesus is making His way through the city of Jericho, but Zacchaeus can't see Him because of the crowd. It's hard for him to see because of his height. He can't catch a glimpse because he's not that tall. He can't get a good look because he's too short so his issue serves as inspiration to try something else. Since he's unable to see he runs up ahead. Since he can't catch a glimpse he climbs up a tree. Since he's too short to look he goes out on a limb because you've got to get in position if you wanna be blessed!

See, sometimes you've got to be willing to risk the embarrassment. Sometimes you've got to do things that will make you look foolish. Zacchaeus was the only one hanging out in the tree, but out of everybody that was around he got blessed!

Every now and then you've got to do something that will make you look stupid. Sometimes you've got to do something that will make you look silly. Every now and then you've got to try something that will make you look foolish because the Lord will show up and give you the blessing!

You may not have the degree, but apply for the job. You may not have the credit, but apply for the house. You may not have the money, but go back to school because God has a way of working things out.

And somebody can testify because you didn't have the experience, but you got the job. Your credit was messed up, but you got the house. Your money was kind of funny, but you got the degree because the Lord showed up and blessed your life!

Zacchaeus used his issue to serve as inspiration. He allowed his problem to become his motivation. He used his condition to better his situation and he ended up getting blessed like never before.

See, sometimes you've got to try anything to better your situation. Sometimes you've got to try anything to improve your condition. When you get tired of seeing the same thing over and over again you'll try almost anything to turn things around.

I'm talking to somebody because you got fed up with struggling and you opened the business. You got sick of the apartment and you went after the house. The medicine wasn't working so you laid hands on yourself and the Lord stopped by and blessed your life!

Folk said it wasn't possible, but you got the blessing. They thought you were foolish, but you got the favor. They looked at you crazy, but you got the healing because you made a decision to step outside of the box!

Sometimes you've got to pray for yourself when you can't find a deacon. You've got to preach to yourself when you can't find a preacher. You've got to worship in your house instead of waiting for Sunday morning and the Lord will show up and bless your life!

## **II. You can't let your status hinder your breakthrough – v. 2-4**

In verse 2, we discover that Zacchaeus is a chief tax collector. We're also informed that he's a wealthy brother. He has a prime position and he makes a lot of money, but he doesn't let his status interfere with his blessing.

He has a nice job, but He still needs Jesus. He's bringing home the *Benjamins*, but He still needs the Lord. He's in a leadership role, but He wants to see the Messiah and he's willing to do what's necessary to accomplish his goal.

I like that because sometimes we allow our titles to hinder our blessing. We allow our positions to block what was promised. We allow our status to mess up our breakthrough because we believe we should act in a certain way.

That's why you should take a look at this brother named Zacchaeus because he doesn't allow his position to get in his way. He climbs up in a tree just to see Jesus. He goes out on a limb in order to be blessed. He does something unusual to receive something better and he really doesn't care about what anybody thinks.

That's why you can't let your position interfere with your praise. You can't let your title interfere with your worship. You've got to be willing to give God the glory and you can't be concerned about what other people think.

When you're in need of a blessing you've got to forget about your title. When you're in need of a miracle, you've got to forget about your status. When you're in need of a breakthrough, you've got to forget about your position and you've got to do whatever it takes for you to be blessed!

And I may have somebody that can say, "I've struggled for too long for me to act cute. I've been through too much for me to be quiet. I've cried too many tears for me to sit still and I really don't care what anybody thinks"!

Sometimes you've got to praise until something happens. Sometimes you've got to worship until He brings you out. Sometimes you've got to bless Him until you get the blessing and you don't have to apologize for how you behave!

Don't let your education hinder your blessing. Don't let where you live interfere with your promise. Don't allow your money to hinder your breakthrough. You've got to be willing to do whatever it takes!

If you've got to take off your shoes – then take them off. If you've got to loosen your tie – then take it loose. If you've got to get in the aisle – then do your thing and don't be concerned about what other folk think.

If they knew your situation, they wouldn't have a problem. If they knew about your issue, they would understand. If they knew what you were going through, they would leave you alone. That's why you've got to be willing to go out on a limb!

See, I've discovered that some people are too cute for them to be blessed. Some folk are too bourgeoisie for them to get delivered. Some folk are too sophisticated for them to get their breakthrough. That's why you've got to be willing to put your pride on the shelf!

Zacchaeus forgot about his position and did something crazy. He forgot about his status and did something foolish. He forgot about his money and did something strange, but he was the only one that walked away with a blessing!

I saw something else that caught my attention. There was something else in the text that caught my eye. Zacchaeus had to go ahead of the crowd to improve his condition. He had to go up in a tree to receive his breakthrough. He had to go higher in order to be blessed because you can't stay where you are if you want something better.

If you want more anointing you've got to go higher. If you want greater ministry you can't stay where you are. If you want what's in store for you you've got to go to the next level because you can't receive it if you stay where you are.

### **III. You can still receive the promise in spite of your past – v. 8 & 9**

I'm so glad Jesus ain't like some of us. If somebody makes a mistake we hold it against them. If they do something wrong we want them to step down. If they make a bad decision we're ready to kick them out but that's not the case when it comes to the Lord.

In the text, Jesus called Zacchaeus down from the tree because He had intentions to go to his house. The people that were around saw this happen and they said, "He's gone to be the guest of a sinner." Zacchaeus is employed as a chief tax collector and tax

collectors were known for defrauding the people. Jews worked as tax collectors for the Roman government and they made a habit of ripping off people. They would overcharge people when taxes were due and they would keep the extra money for themselves. It's obvious that Zacchaeus practiced this scheme because in verse 8 he tries to make amends. He said, "I give half of my possessions to the poor and I'll pay four times the amount to the folk I've cheated."

Zacchaeus was a thief, but he got blessed. Zacchaeus did wrong, but he got the promise. Zacchaeus was a criminal, but he got saved because Jesus said that salvation had come to his house. Zacchaeus was a robber, but he got delivered. He made some mistakes, but he got set free. He made some bad choices, but he got a breakthrough because the Lord will still bless you in spite of your past.

That should have made somebody shout because you've made some mistakes, but you still got blessed. You made some bad choices, but you received what He promised. You've done your share of wrong, but you got the increase because the Lord will still bless you in spite of your past.

In spite of what you've done, you've got food on your table. In spite of what you've done, you've got clothes on your back. In spite of what you did, you've got a place to lay your head and that should be enough to give God the praise.

And I might have somebody that can testify because you have always done right, but He still made a way. You haven't always been faithful, but He still opened a door. You haven't always been obedient; but He provided what you needed because that's the kind of God you serve.



As a matter of fact, when you made the wrong choice He was there to protect you. When you made the bad decision He was there to cover you. When you made the mistake He was there to deliver you and that's why you should be willing to give Him the glory.

I saw something else that caught my attention. Zacchaeus robbed the people, but he didn't serve any time. Zacchaeus was a thief, but he didn't go to prison. Zacchaeus was a crook, but he didn't go to jail because you don't always get what you deserve. And I may have a witness because you should have been dead and sleeping in your grave. You should have been on drugs and out of your mind. You should have five babies from three different people but He looked beyond your faults and saw your need!

I don't know about you, but I thank God for grace because I wouldn't be here today. I thank God for mercy because I wouldn't be here now. The only reason I'm so blessed like I am right now is because His grace and mercy was on my side.

And I don't think I'm by myself because if it wasn't for grace you wouldn't be where you are. If it wasn't for grace you wouldn't be here now. If it wasn't for His mercy things could have been worse. That's why every now and then you should take time to give God praise.

Sometimes you ought to think about where you would be. Sometimes you ought to think about what could have happened. Sometimes you ought to think about what could have taken place and that should be enough for you to bless His name!

I'll let ya'll go, but Zacchaeus climbed a tree and received salvation. Zacchaeus climbed a tree and received what was promised. Zacchaeus climbed a tree and he got set free because great things will happen when you go out on a limb.

That's what happened on a hill called Calvary. Jesus got on a tree to save our life. They hung Him high and they stretched Him wide. He hung His head and then He died. He died on that Friday and all day Saturday, but early Sunday morning He got up with all power!

Since He got on the tree, salvation is free. Since He got on the tree, our sins are forgiven. Since He got on the tree, we don't have to pay a price because whom the Son sets free is free indeed.

**Get Out the Boat**  
**John 21:1-11**

It should be the goal of every believer to grow in the Lord. It should be the aim of every saint to strive for improvement. You should not want to be this year where you were on last year. You should not want to be now where you were the day before. You should not want to be in the same position that you were in the past. You should be seeking to make some progress everyday that passes by.

Your marriage should be better today than it was on yesterday. Your ministry should be more anointed than it's ever been before. Your debt should be lower than what it was in '05 because you should be seeking to make some progress in your life.

I don't know about you, but I don't wanna end up this year where I was on last year. I don't wanna be in the same position that I'm in at the present time. I wanna make some advancement from where I am right now because every round should go higher when you're hooked up with God.

You shouldn't wanna stay on the same level that you're on right now. You shouldn't wanna stay in the same condition that you're in at the present time. You should wanna see some improvements each week that goes by when you know there's something better in store for your life.

See, I've discovered that things will get boring when you don't strive for improvement. Things will become dull if you stay where you are. Things will get stale if you don't change your routine. That's why you've got to be willing to get out of the boat. You've got to be willing to try something different. You've got to be willing to do something new. You can't be content with business as usual because growth won't take place if you stay on the boat.

The boat represents the place where you have settled. The boat is the place where you've become satisfied. The boat represents the place that makes you real comfortable, but if you want to make progress you've got to get wet.

You can't stay on the boat if you want something better. You can't stay where you are if you wanna move up. You can't stay on the boat if you want the increase. You've got to be willing to do something that will make you look foolish!

That's what we discover in our text. Peter and his crew had gone out fishing and the text lets us know that they came up empty. We're told later on they were blessed with a great catch and that's when Peter decided to get out the boat.

That caught my eye because Peter got wet while the others stayed dry. He decided to leave while they stayed in their spot. The last time this happened they did the same thing. Which means they still haven't changed since the first time around!

There was something else that caught my attention. Peter left the boat in order to get to Jesus. He left where he was to get to the Lord. I like that because Peter left the blessing to go after the Blesser. Peter left the gifts and went after the Giver. He decided to leave the product to go after the Lord's presence because he had made some progress in his life.

I don't know about you, but I'd rather have the Blesser instead of the blessings. I'd rather have the Giver instead of the gifts. I'd rather have His presence instead of the product because His presence is a blessing all by itself!

I'd rather have the Blesser because money can't wake me up. I'd rather have the Blesser because the job can't give me joy. I'd rather have the Blesser because the car can't give me peace. That's why I'll leave the blessing to go after the Lord!

See, some people need a house to make them shout. Some people need a job to make them praise. Some folk need a car to make them dance, but I'll rather have Jesus than anything else!

I'll rather have Jesus because the house can't heal you. I'll rather have Jesus because the job can't protect you. I'll rather have Jesus because the car can't deliver you. Deliverance can only come when you call on the Lord.

If you seek the Blessor He'll give you the blessing. If you seek the Giver He'll give you the gifts. Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you!

### **Relevant Question**

**Why should I be willing to make some improvements?**

#### **I. Even though you were defiant He still provided – v. 6**

When you research the text, you discover that the disciples received a message to meet Jesus in Galilee because He wanted to give them instructions before He departed. He had risen from the grave with all power in His hands and He wanted to give them their assignment before He returned to the Father.

He wanted them to meet Him in a certain place, but they went out fishing. He had selected a certain spot, but they got into a boat. They were gathered together, but they grew impatient because He hadn't shown up in the time they expected.

They went out fishing, but they didn't catch a thing. They got in their boat, but caught nothing at all. They went out on their own and wasted their time because you'll always come up empty when you don't wait on Lord.

It wasn't until the morning when Jesus showed up. It was early in the morning when He stood on the shore. Even though they were defiant He gave them some advice and they ended up catching a great deal of fish.

Jesus said something that I thought was intriguing. He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat." Which means they've been fishing on the left side all night long. The reason they hadn't caught anything while they were out is because they had the net on the wrong side of the boat.

I don't know who I'm talking to, but God said "Throw your net on the other side, because what you're doing ain't working. You need to try something different since you've been coming up empty. You need to try something else since you haven't caught anything because you've probably been fishing on the wrong side of the boat."

Let's get back to the point because even though they were disobedient He gave them a blessing. Even though they were unfaithful He gave them a breakthrough. Even though they were defiant He blessed them with overflow because He'll look beyond your faults and supply what you need.

Somebody knows what I'm talking about because you've made some mistakes, but He put food on the table. You've done the wrong thing, but He paid your bills. You've made some bad choices, but He still made a way and that's why you should be willing to give Him the praise!

I don't know about you, but I've discovered that when you are unfaithful He remains faithful. When you turn away He's still by your side. When you're acting crazy He still keeps His covenant because He knows that you'll need Him later on down the line!

The disciples rebelled, but they still got blessed. They did their own thing, but He still provided. They made a bad decision, but they still received favor because the Lord will show you mercy in spite of your mess.

And I may have a witness because you haven't always lived holy, but you received His favor. You haven't always been righteous, but you received what He promised. You haven't always been an angel, but He still gave you the blessing and that's why you should be willing to give Him the glory!

That should have blessed somebody because in spite of what you did, He still opened a door. In spite of your mistakes, He still gave you the miracle. In spite of your flaws, He continued to cover you and that should be enough for you to bless His name!

There was something else in the text that caught my attention. In verse 2, the writer refers to the first disciple as Simon Peter. That caught my eye because he was referred to as Simon before he met Jesus. Jesus called him Peter, but now Simon is attached because sometimes we have a tendency to go back to our old ways.

Peter went back to his old ways, but he still got blessed. He went back to his old habits, but the Lord still provided. He went out on an impulse, but he still received favor because even though you turn back He's still on your side!

That's why you should be willing to make some improvements. That's why you should be willing to make some adjustments because if the Lord still blessed you in spite of your mistakes just imagine what He would do if you straighten things out!

## **II. When you recognize who's responsible for turning things around – v. 7**

In verse 4, we discover that Jesus stood on the shore but the disciples didn't know who He was. They took His advice and made a great catch and that's when it became clear that it was the Lord.

I like that because they didn't realize it was Him, but they obeyed His voice. They weren't sure who He was, but they followed His word. They couldn't make Him out, but they did what He told them because when things aren't that obvious you've got to do what He said.

It may not make any sense, but do what He told you. You may be confused, but do what He said. You may be unsure, but take Him at His word because you'll end up getting blessed if you follow His voice.

They followed His word and ended up with a blessing and that's when they recognized who turned things around. They had been fishing all night out on the sea, but they didn't catch a thing until the Lord showed up.

They didn't catch a blessing until the Lord showed up. They didn't find success until He stepped on the scene. There wasn't anything happening until He appeared because the advice that He gave them blessed their life.

And I may have a witness because you were laid off from the job until the Lord showed up. You were sick in your body until He stepped on the scene. You were struggling just to make it until He paid you a visit and He did something for you to turn things around.



I don't wanna start nothing, but if it wasn't for the Lord you would have been evicted. If it wasn't for the Lord, you would have been divorced. If it wasn't for the Lord, you would have lost your mind because He showed up and worked things out.

That should have made somebody shout because you were still in the apartment before the Lord showed up. You didn't have a dime until He stepped on the scene. You were about to give in until He paid you a visit and He did some things for you that blessed your life!

Somebody knows what I'm talking about because your life was a mess, but He turned things around. You were headed the wrong way, but He blessed your life. You were having rough times, but He stepped on the scene and that's why you don't mind giving Him praise!

See, God will allow you to fail so you won't take any credit. He'll let things fall apart so you won't get confused. He'll allow you to stumble so that when He brings you out you can't help but say, "It was nobody, but God."

Peter got out of the boat when things became clear. He got out of the boat when He got blessed. He jumped into the water and made His way to Jesus because He knew He'd made a difference in his life.

And somebody can testify because you're better off today than you were on yesterday. You're more blessed now than you were in the past. You were having a rough season, but He paid you a visit and He has made a difference in your life!

### **III. He'll let you keep what you should have loss – v. 11**

In the text, we're told that the disciples were unable to haul the catch in the boat because the Lord blessed them with a large number of fish. They were unable to pull the net inside the boat because they received a blessing that they really couldn't handle.

Verse 11 says, "When the net was dragged ashore it was full of large fish, but even with so many the net was not torn. They had a big catch, but the net didn't split. It was full of large fish, but the net didn't tear. They had a heavy load, but the net didn't break because sometimes He'll let you keep what you should have loss.

The net should have ripped with such a great catch. The net should have snapped as a result of the weight. It should have come apart because the fish were too heavy, but the Lord will let you hang on to some things you should have loss.

And I may have a witness because there are some things you should have loss that He allowed you to keep. There are some things you should have loss that He allowed you to maintain. Some things should have fell apart because of your mistakes, but He let you retain what could have been destroyed.

You should have loss your marriage, but He allowed you to keep it. You should have loss your job, but He let you hang on. You should have loss your mind, but He allowed you to maintain it because He still had purpose for your life!

You did some crazy things, but He allowed you to hold on. You did some silly stuff, but He kept things in place. You did your share of dirt, but He allowed you to hang on because He created you to bring glory to His name.

I don't know who this is for, but you should have loss your liver from all of your drinking. Your lungs should have collapsed after all of your smoking. Your brain should

have fried from using the drugs, but He allowed you to maintain what should have been destroyed!

Sometimes you ought to thank Him for providing His grace. Sometimes you ought to bless Him for giving you mercy. Sometimes you ought to praise Him for what He's done because He allowed you to keep what should have been lost!

I'm talking to somebody because you should have been divorced. You should have been in jail. You should have been dead, but He preserved your life.

I don't know who I'm talking to but God said, "You were one step away from a divorce. You were one step away from going to prison. You were one step away from being in the grave, but He provided you with grace to save your life"!

I like the text because if you're thankful for what He's done you'll turn things over to Him. If you're grateful for what He did you'll release things to Him. When the disciples got to shore they turned things over to Him. When they got out of the boat they release things to Him. They knew He was the reason why they were so blessed. That's why they were willing to release the blessing back over to Him.

So if He kept your mind – release it to Him. If you still got the business – turn it over to Him. If you still have the marriage – give it to Him because He can do more with it than you can by yourself!

Let's get out of here, but when the disciples got ashore Peter climbed aboard because they couldn't handle the blessing by themselves. They couldn't drag the net by themselves, but they needed a little help from somebody else.

I'll see ya'll tomorrow, but high five somebody and tell 'em "I'm gonna need some help with my next blessing. I'm gonna need help when He gives me the

breakthrough. I'm gonna need a hand when He gives me the increase because I won't be able to handle it by myself."

So stay by my side because I'm gonna need help. Don't leave my sight because I'll need your support. Stay in the area because it's on the way and I wanna be a blessing to somebody else!

When I get the blessing I won't be selfish. When I get the breakthrough I won't be stingy. When I get the increase I won't be greedy, but I'm gonna go out and share the blessing with somebody else!

**It's Time to Get Up**  
**2 Kings 7:3-11**

There comes a time when you've got to decide to stop putting things off. There comes a time when you've got to decide to stop dragging your feet. You've got to make up in your mind to move on what God told you so you won't miss out on the blessings that He has for your life.

Sometimes we get too comfortable with where we are. Sometimes we have a problem leaving what's familiar. Sometimes we get so use to the way things have always been that we never seek to move from where we are.

You've got to stop hanging in places that are beneath your level. You've got to get away from people that don't have your best interest. You've got to leave where you are and take God at His word so you can receive everything that's in store for your life.

I just came to bless somebody because God told you what to do, but you still haven't moved. He gave you the vision, but you're still passing time. He dropped a word in your spirit, but you're still waiting around because you've gotten too comfortable where you are.

You've settled for average when God promised abundance. You've settled for little when He promised you much. You're happy with ordinary when God promised you overflow and He wanted me to tell you "it's time to get up."

It's time to get up from where you've been hanging. It's time to get up from what you've been doing. It's time to get up from business as usual because He has something better for your life!

See, when you stay where you are you block your own blessing. When you refuse to make a move you delay your deliverance. When you put off what He told you – you miss out on your season. That’s why you’ve got to tell yourself “it’s time to get up.” It’s time to get up and take care of business. It’s time to get up and take control of your life. It’s time to rise up and improve your condition because God doesn’t want you to stay where you are. He has something better for you to enjoy. He has something greater for you to experience. He has something bigger for you to attain, but you’ll never receive it if you never get up.

That’s what we discover in our text. We’re introduced to four brothers who have encountered a famine and they have to leave where they are to get their blessing. They were hanging out at the entrance of the gate in Samaria when they decided to “get up” to improve their condition. Since they were afflicted with leprosy they were considered unclean so they were banned from having contact with folk in the city. They were sitting at the gate when they made a decision to depart from the place where they were hanging. They had wasted a lot of time suffering at the gate before they decided to leave for the enemy’s camp. If they stayed where they were they were gonna die. If they went into the city – the famine was there. So they decided to go to the enemy’s camp because they were fed up with the way in which they were living.

When they left where they were they encountered a blessing because God went before them to scare off the enemy. When they got up from the gate they experienced increase because God used a sound to confuse the enemy.

I don't wanna start nothing, but when you decide to get up the enemy gets scared. When you decide to get up the devil gets nervous. When you decide to get up you give him a flashback because the last time somebody got up he suffered a loss.

See, when you decide to get up he starts to panic. When you decide to get up he gets afraid. When you decide to get up you send him a message to the devil that you don't have plans to stay where you are!

Don't miss what I said earlier. God used a sound to scare off the enemy. God used a sound to make the enemy run. God used a sound to confuse the enemy because when the enemy hears noise it gets on his nerves.

That's why you've got to praise when you're under attack. That's why you've got to shout when he comes against you. You've got to give God the glory when he tries to stop you because you'll make him run when you make some noise!

### **Relevant Question**

**Why should I move out on what God told me?**

#### **I. You ain't got nothing to lose – v. 3 & 4**

Sometimes you've got to take a risk just to get your blessing. Sometimes you've got to break the protocol just to get your breakthrough. There comes a time when you've got to be willing to step outside the box even though it might be a dangerous move. Every now and then you've got to do whatever it takes. Sometimes you've got to put your neck on the line. There comes a time when you've got to step out on a limb – especially when you find yourself in a desperate situation.

When the odds are against you you've got to do what's necessary. When you're at the end of your rope you've got to try almost anything. When your back is against the wall you've got to do what you've got to do just to because when you're in a desperate situation you ain't got nothing to lose.

That's what we discover in our text. The four brothers find themselves in a messed up situation and they decide to take a risk to get what they need. They are living in a famine and they're on the verge of dying so they decide to risk their lives to improve their condition.

In verse 3, they said to one another "Why stay here and die." Let's get up from where we are and go after our blessing. I like that because they said to one another "Why stay here and die" because you need people in your life that won't let you settle for less. You need people that are willing to say, "You need to leave him alone." You need some friends that will tell you, "She's not the one." You need some people in your corner that will keep it real even if what they tell you might hurt your feelings.

I don't know about you, but I need some folk in my corner that will tell me the truth. I need some people in my circle that will make things plain. I need some people that are willing to tell me the truth even though I may not like what they have to say.

Let's get back to the text. The brothers expressed to each other "Why stay here at the gate. If we stay where we are we'll eventually die. If we go into the city we'll also die there. If we go to the enemy we might die there, but there's a possibility that we might live."



They said, "If we stay where we are things will get worse. If we stay where we are things won't improve. So even though it's a risk going to the enemy's camp there's a slight chance that things will work out."

See, sometimes you've got to be willing to go outside the box. Sometimes you've got to be willing to break the tradition. Sometimes you've got to be willing to go against the norm just to get the blessing that you need.

You've got to apply for the job even though you're not qualified. You've got to apply for the loan, even though you don't have the credit. You've got to put in for the house even though you don't have the money because there's a slim chance that God will work things out.

And I may have a witness that can say, "I didn't have the experience, but I got the job. I didn't have the money, but opened up the business. I didn't have the credit, but I got the house because God has a way of working things out."

Sometimes, you've got to do things that will make you look crazy. Sometimes you've got to do things that don't make any sense. Sometimes you've got to try something that will make you look foolish just to get the blessing that you need.

When the medicine doesn't work, you've got to plead the blood of Jesus. When you're attacked on the job, you've got to worship in your cubicle. When your child is acting crazy, you've got to anoint them with oil so you can see a change in their life! If you don't do anything it may get worse. If you don't make a move it will never improve. That's why you've got to do whatever it takes because you're in a situation where you ain't got nothing to lose!

## **II. You've got to recognize that timing is everything – v. 5**

In verse 5, we're informed that the four brothers got up at dusk and went to the enemy's camp. That caught my eye because in verse 7 the enemy got up at dusk and ran from the scene. When the brothers made a move the enemy ran away because God caused a sound that made them afraid.

The brothers were concerned about their opposition, but when they decided to get up God moved on their behalf. They had some apprehension with what they were doing, but when they decided to move God cleared things out. They got up at dusk and that's when the enemy fled because timing is everything when you're working with God.

When they decided to get up God made some noise. When they decided to move He sent out a sound. When they left where they were God went into warfare and made the enemy leave the blessing behind.

They said, "The king of Israel has hired the Hittite and Egyptian kings and they fled in the dusk and abandoned their tents." They heard a great noise that sounded like an army and they decided to get up and run for their lives. There were only four brothers, but God pumped up the volume so they could receive what He had for their life.

That's why you can't procrastinate on what God told you. You can't put off what He placed in your spirit. You can't drag your feet on the vision He gave you because He has an appointed time to give you the blessing.

It may seem too hard, but you've got to trust what He said. It may seem too difficult, but you've got to press ahead. It may seem impossible, but you've got to step out and God will make a way to bless your life.

The brothers stepped out and received their blessing. They decided to make a move and got blessed with a miracle. They left where they were and didn't have to worry about anything because God put the blessing right in their lap.

Somebody knows what I'm talking about because you took God at His word and He made a way. You stepped out on His word and He opened a door. You moved out on what He said and received your breakthrough because timing is everything when you're dealing with God.

God has a set time to give you the blessing. He has set time to give you the increase. He's already decided when you'll get delivered. That's why you've got to move on what He said.

You may not have the money, but you've got to be faithful. You may not have a degree, but you've got to step out. You may have some doubts, but you've got to move because God will drop the blessing in your lap.

I don't know who this is for but God said, "You've been struggling too long and it's time to get up. You've been broke for too long and it's time for a change. You've been through too much for you to stay where you are and you need to step up so He can turn things around!"

And I may have somebody that can say, "I'm more blessed today than I was on yesterday. I'm more blessed right now than I've ever been before. I left where I was and took God at His word and it has been blessing to my life"!

I don't know about you, but when I think of where I used to be I've got to give God praise. When I think of where I was, I've got to give Him glory. When I looked

back on my life, I've got to bless His name because He has brought me from a mighty long way!

And I don't think I'm by myself, because you haven't always been as blessed as you are right now. You haven't always made what you're making right now. You didn't have a dime, but you step out on His word and it has made a difference in your life!

Sometimes you've got to wait until the midnight hour. Sometimes you've got to stand until the last second. You've got to hold on when you want to let go because He will show up in the nick of time!

### **III. You'll receive more than you expected – v. 7 & 8**

In the text, the brothers made their way to the enemy's camp due to a drought that was in their land. All they were looking for was something to eat and drink, but they ended up receiving more than they expected. All they were looking for was an ordinary blessing, but God did something to blow their mind.

The text says when they reached the edge of the camp they discovered that the enemy had abandoned their tents. Not only did the enemy abandon their tents, but verse 7 says they also left their horses and their donkeys. In addition to leaving their horses and donkeys, they also left their silver, gold and clothes.

I don't know about you, but that made me wanna shout because they only went to the camp to get some food and drink, but they ended up getting something they never expected. They were just looking for the basics to help them survive, but God did something beyond what they had in mind.

I need you to get this. They were looking for food, but they also received transportation because the enemy left their horses and donkeys behind. They were looking for something to drink, but they also received money because they found gold and silver inside the tents. They wanted food and drink, but they also got clothes because the enemy fled the camp and abandoned their stuff. They were looking for one thing, but they got blessed with another thing because God did something they never expected!

I don't know who I'm talking to, but you need to move because He's gonna do something to blow your mind. You need to get up and do what He said because He's gonna bless you in a way you've never imagined. He's gonna open up the window and pour you out a blessing that you won't have enough room to receive it!

And I may have a witness because you expected something regular, but He did something ridiculous. You expected something common, but He did something crazy. You only expected "this", but He gave you "this", "that" and the "other" because He'll do exceedingly and abundantly above what you ask or think!

I like what the text has to offer, because the brothers went to the camp and got blessed by the enemy. They went to the camp and got blessed by their haters because God doesn't always use people that love you, but sometimes He'll use your enemies to bless your life.

Somebody knows what I'm talking about, because God used your haters to give you the blessing. God used your enemy to give you the breakthrough. He used folk that didn't like you to give you the increase because what they meant for evil worked out for your good.

I don't know who this is for, but God said "I'm gonna use folk that can't stand you to give you the blessing. I'm using folk that plot against you to give you the breakthrough. He's gonna use folk that talk about you to give you the promotion because He'll use your enemy as a footstool to take you higher!

I'll let ya'll go, but the brothers said "It's not right for us to keep everything to ourselves." Let's go back to the gate and announce it in the city because you shouldn't keep the blessing to yourself. You should be willing to share the blessing with somebody else. You can't be selfish when God gives you the blessing, but you've got to go back and be a blessing to somebody else.

Let's get out of here, but when you move into the house invite somebody over. When you get the promotion take somebody out. When you get blessed with the car give your neighbor a ride because you should be a blessing to somebody else.

Have a good week and may the Lord bless you real good, but God used the enemy to bless the four brothers. God used the enemy to give them the increase. He did the same thing about 2,000 years ago because He used the enemy to bless His son. They hung Him high and they stretched Him wide. He hung His head and then He died. But He said, "If you destroy this temple give me three days because I already know where I'm headed. He died on that Friday and He was down on that Saturday, but He said on Sunday morning "it's time to get up"!

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